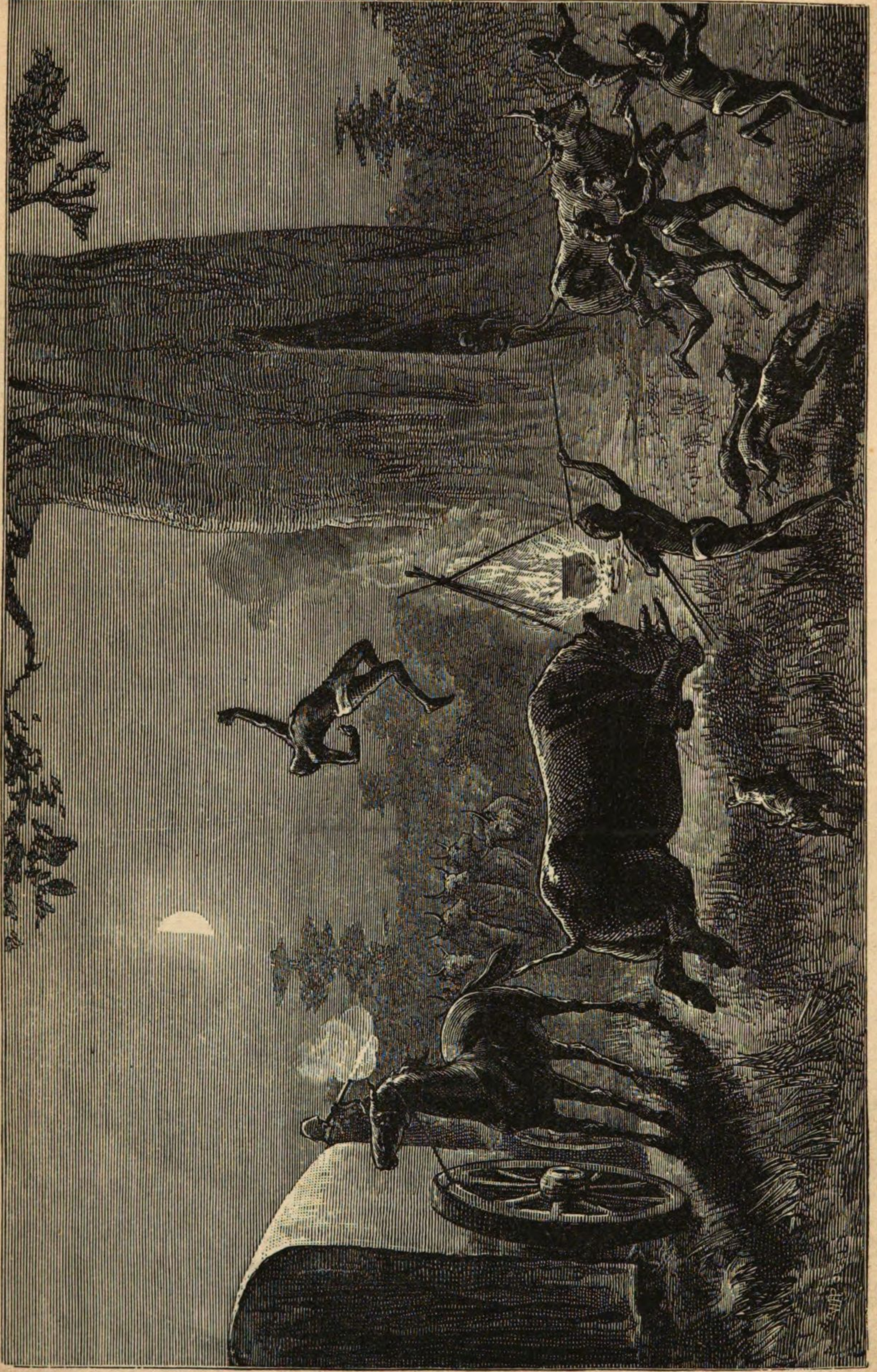


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W
GREAT THIRST LAND:

*A Ride through Natal, Orange Free State,
Transvaal, and Kalahari Desert.*

BY

PARKER GILLMORE,

*Author of "Afloat and Ashore," "All Round the World," "Prairie and Forest,"
"Gun, Rod, and Saddle," "Accessible Field Sports," "Adventures in the Far
West," "Prairie Farms and Prairie Folks," "Lone Life," &c. &c.*

WITH A FRONTISPIECE.

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To

MY DEAR OLD MOTHER

I DEDICATE THIS BOOK,

AS A SLIGHT RETURN FOR THE

MANY ANXIOUS HOURS I HAVE CAUSED HER WHEN WANDERING

IN DISTANT LANDS.

PARKER GILLMORE.

PREFACE.

I SHOOT for the pot—*id est*, to fill the pot; when that is done I cease to take the lives of valuable, food-furnishing animals. Thus I have to record no wonderful bags of game, but simply the killing of what was absolutely necessary for the support of myself and attendants.

Further, this narrative is written with the hope of amusing and instructing the general reader, as well as to impart information to the sportsman, that will enable him to find the lion and the elephant.

Moreover, let no one be led away with the idea that every one has the privilege of shooting in these distant parts. So far from this being the case, it is only by special favour one can obtain permission to hunt large game in "The Great Thirst Land."

And, lastly, I would say that with moderate expenditure and half a dozen attendants I will pass through Africa from south to north, and probably not take more than a year to do it. My method is simplicity itself, and would probably not involve the death of a human being. The *modus operandi*, however, will only be imparted to those desirous to assist me in the undertaking.

P. G.

15, Claverton Street,
London, S.W.

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THE GREAT THIRST LAND.

CHAPTER I.

AN INVITATION TO TRAVEL.

Herefordshire—The Term “Hunting”—A Visit to the West—An Invitation—
My Friend Morris—Sport in the Highlands—The Battery—Buying Guns—
Our Armament—Beads and Gewgaws—Particulars of our Personal Outfit.

HEREFORDSHIRE must be acknowledged by all who know it to be one of the prettiest counties in England, and if a choice could be made as to which part has a right to be considered the most attractive, I have little doubt that all sportsmen would join me in the verdict that the country north of the Malvern Hills is the most charming. And why? Because if it were unsettled, uninhabited, unimproved, it would make the most magnificent hunting-ground—if I except the Bijou Hills, in Nebraska—in the whole world. But when I say “hunting,” that term has so many significations that it behoves me to become explicit. In America you “go hunting” when you take your gun to procure a few partridges, or squirrels, or wild fowl; in England the term is applied only to the pursuit of the fox or hare, accompanied by hounds, with the sportsmen mounted. Now it is neither in the American nor English sense that I use the word, but to denote the killing of large

game with the rifle—when stalking is necessary, when the wind has to be consulted, when every stick, stone, and bush has to be utilised ; and it is in these particulars that the rolling, wooded slopes of Herefordshire are as nearly perfect as it is possible to imagine. Again, a circumstance not to be overlooked—for nought does more, or has a more substantial bearing on the accumulation of wild animals in their natural state—is that in every valley an abundance of water—never mind how long the parched and dry summer may have been—is to be found. I have been thus wordy ; for it is necessary that the reader of the subsequent pages should know exactly the sense in which I use an expression that must of necessity frequently occur ; so when I speak of lands or districts favourable for sport, I should like it to be distinctly understood what are the characteristics of the places I deem so.

Almost three years ago, I returned from America, whither I had gone to visit my old hunting-grounds, to renew the scenes of my youth, and, in imagination at least, perform my old exploits. Alas ! how altered, how changed, had the great Western continent become ! West, farther west, still farther west, I pushed my way, but the game had gone to the spirit-land, with the exception of a few patriarchal bull buffaloes, and a stray antelope ; grizzly bears, where they had once been numerous, had entirely disappeared, and the weird voice of the wolf was unknown where for centuries every rock and cranny had nightly echoed their responding notes. To the lover of field-sports such alterations are sad indeed ; so, wearily and sick at heart, I retraced my way to the land of my childhood.

Thus, a little over two years ago, I was to be found

in Herefordshire, wondering how I could kill time, debating whether to take my rod and try the lovely little Mathon brook, or saunter up some of the hill-sides, and watch the antics of the playful rabbits, when the always-looked-for event of the day—the arrival of the letter-bag—took place. “Old man,” said my host, “here is a letter for you.” I took it, looked at the address, and knew not the writing. The Scotch postmark puzzled me still more. The contents were surprising, terse, and to the point. “Will you accompany me on a hunting-trip to Tropical South Africa for a year or two?” That night the mail took my answer, in which I asked for an interview. A week after, my future companion and self could have been found closeted in a most snug apartment—half bed, half sitting room—the window, gently touched by the spray-like limbs of a graceful birch-tree, while on the table stood a decanter of Amon-tillado sherry, surrounded by cigars, or their remains.

I do not wish to add one word of fiction, but during nearly that entire night—and we did not retire to our dormitories till long after the sun had risen from his eastern couch—a nightingale warbled from the adjacent bushes.

My new friend—afterwards my tried companion—I will call Morris, and a description of him may not be inappropriate. He was the same height as myself—six feet—but slighter in build, his weight being twelve stone three, mine being just under thirteen—upright, well-made, very quiet, gentlemanly, and unassuming. Although under thirty, he had travelled all over the world, hunted in the Rocky Mountains, killed large game in India and the Malay Archipelago, and bagged wild fowl, pheasants, and snipe in China and Japan.

That evening is one of those marked with red letters in the calendar of my memory. We had both been in the same countries, done the same things, and even met in many instances the same people. No wonder, then, that time flew on rapid wings, or that the sun surprised us in our gossip.

Next morning he departed as rapidly as he made his advent, leaving me authority to make all arrangements for the proposed expedition, which I probably was more capable of undertaking, as my residence was within a short distance of Birmingham, the great manufacturing centre of nearly all we should want for our journey.

A couple of months after our first interview Morris and I might have been seen fagging after grouse in Argyleshire, or fly-fishing some of the innumerable lakes of the great Breadalbane deer-forest.

This meeting gave me a good opportunity of learning that my future comrade was a sportsman of the very first water, and gifted with a great amount of those qualities—patience, perseverance, and endurance—that he who wanders in foreign lands so eminently requires.

After two or three most enjoyable weeks, we parted, not to meet till a day or two previous to sailing, our departure being fixed for an early date in October.

On such an expedition as I am about to do my best to describe, few persons will deny that the battery deserves special notice. To do good work requires good tools, and when your life may depend upon their performance, it behoves a man to be doubly careful. Of course, there are plenty of good gun-makers whose attention to what they undertake can be thoroughly relied

upon; but they invariably—and most notably those in the metropolis—charge such exorbitant prices that a large armament is beyond the means of all who have not a heavy banking account. Thus, a few years ago, I wanted a strong, serviceable double-gun. A friend advised me to try a Birmingham firm; I did so, and received in consequence one of the most perfect weapons ever manufactured. On the Chesapeake I shot canvas-back duck with it; if held straight, no bird could escape under sixty yards, and very few indeed under eighty. In fact, it was as good a shot-gun as I ever had to my shoulder; and what do you think I paid for it? Thirteen pounds sterling. Many will say that it was a rattle-trap thing, without finish. Nothing of the sort—it was quite the reverse, and, with the exception of the engraving on the lock-plates, was as perfect as anything originating from St. James's Street. Day after day, on the Susquehanna, I used this gun. Mr. Ballard, Mr. Frick, and a dozen other gentlemen of Baltimore, saw its execution, and marvelled at it. So now, when I am going to Africa, to meet the lion, the black rhinoceros, the leopard, and last, though not least, the lordly elephant, is it to be wondered at that I should return to the suppliers of this gun for the slaughter of canvas-backs to provide me with what I required to kill the graceful spring-buck, the awkward giraffe, or the portly eland? Well, I did so; my wants were stated, and my ideas listened to.

As many may wish to do as I have done, it being requisite for them to be careful in regard to the sums paid for the necessities of their outfit, the hint I have given above will be useful.

Well, I saw a partner of the Birmingham house,

who, from his acquaintance with business in all parts of the world, soon understood my requirements. The only difference of opinion we had was that he wished me to have large-bore rifles instead of large smooth-bores. However, like a wilful man, I had my way.

My order was, four ten-bore double-guns to shoot ball, two eight-bore double-guns also to shoot ball, four Martini-Henry carbines. And, at the partner's request, an eleventh gun was added to what, I am certain, the reader will consider already a most formidable armament. This addition was a single-barrel four-bore rifle—in fact, shooting a quarter-of-a-pound bullet; it happened to be in stock at the time, being one of a number made by the firm for the celebrated traveller and great elephant-hunter, Petherick, of White Nile reputation. With the exception of the last, each gun I saw built, shot, proved, &c. &c.; and, although it cost me many trips to Birmingham, I was amply paid for the trouble by the results.

Through the same firm, I ordered twenty thousand rounds of ball-ammunition, one hundred pounds of gunpowder, five hundred pounds of pig-lead, and five hundred pounds of shot. Of course, even if our trip lasted the contemplated two years, we did not expect to fire such a quantity of cartridges away; but for trading, purchasing food, &c. &c., gunpowder and lead are more attractive to the aborigines than any other article you can offer them. Beads and such gewgaws are now played out among the natives of South Africa—the most gaudy and fascinating colours scarcely evoke an expression of their admiration; so that those who stock themselves with these heavy and cumbrous articles, believing that they can buy ivory, ostrich feathers, &c., with them, will

find, very much to their disgust, that they are wrong, and possibly at so late a date that it is impossible to correct the error.

Waterproofs, saddlery, &c., constituted the remainder of the load, and load it really was, for when the various traps arrived at Messrs. Donald Currie and Co.'s, they weighed upwards of four tons and a half, or something over nine thousand pounds; and I must here return thanks to that generous firm for the care with which everything was stowed, and their liberality in not charging me extra freight. However, before I leave the subject of our outfit, I must not fail to mention the description and cut of the garments we intended doing our work in. These were straight, single-breasted tight-fitting short jackets, with two good-sized pockets on either side, each pocket protected by a large flap. Our unmentionables were ordinary pantaloons, as the most of our sport would be pursued on horseback. These clothes were made of moleskin of the best description attainable, and in my belief it is the only material adapted to the purpose. The formidable nature of African thorns is such, that in a few hours' riding they totally destroyed a pair of the strongest woollen cords, every rib seeming to become a holding-ground admirably suited for bringing you to an anchor; with moleskin this is not likely to happen, but even with these much-resisting raiments you will be surprised how soon they will begin to get seedy-looking and frayed. For head-dress, a strong leather helmet with peak before and behind. Of course, they should be as light as they can possibly be obtained. Solar topees are an abomination, always in the way, never fitting correctly, and when saturated with a chance shower, shrink,

or increase, or do both, and become as crumpled as the cow's horn famed in nursery rhyme.

Once for all—for African hunting every part of your outfit must be of the most durable description, for there is no country that will more try materials, as well as men.

CHAPTER II.

FROM LONDON DOCKS TO DARTMOUTH.

Berths booked—Scenes at Parting—Bustle at the Docks—Brusque John Bull and polite Frenchman—Our Vessel—British and French Sailors—Good-byes at Gravesend—Down Channel—Dutch Galliot—French Luggers—Johnny Crapaud—A Fruiterer—Opposition Sailing on the Mississippi—Beauty of Dartmouth.

THE two days which Morris and I passed in London together soon flew away ; and no wonder, for we appeared not to know what a moment's rest was. There are so many little things absolutely necessary to comfort, that are so unpretending or trifling apparently, that you are safe not to think of them till the last moment, if you do not forget them altogether.

At length all was settled, passages taken, and the time—noon on a Thursday—fixed for our ship sailing. As the kind-hearted owner, Mr. Donald Currie, had promised to see that good berths were detailed for us, and as we had a receipt from the purser, proving that all our things had been safely stowed on board, we deferred our embarkation till 11 a.m. ; for the bustle and confusion on a large passenger-steamship, where wife is bidding a tearful adieu to husband, mother to son—her darling possibly going forth to fight the battle of life—are trying scenes to witness unmoved. How many journeys have I made, how many thousand miles of ocean have I traversed,

yet I do not behold without a feeling of pain these leave-takings; possibly because I know too well that in many, many instances the anticipated return, the long to be looked forward to reunion, will never be realised! All Londoners at least know the Docks; dwellers in the West End would not select the neighbourhood for its attractiveness; and even those whose business it is to follow a sailor's life cannot see much to admire in those giant basins, though they speak of the enterprise, commerce, and wealth of the nation. They are to London what the cotton-mills are to Lancashire, or the blast-furnaces to the Black Country. Well, what between coaling and taking on board cargo, squabbling cabmen and impudent porters, stevedores and their labour-stained gangs, interspersed with a due mixture of sailors, stewards, &c., I should advise the traveller, not to risk missing his passage, but remain at his hotel as long as compatible with certainty of avoiding such a catastrophe. Now, to add to all the above enumerated disagreeables, the day we embarked it rained in torrents, and ceaselessly; every one appeared to be in search of the driest corner, and, if unsuccessful in efforts to obtain it, stared with undisguised dislike at the more fortunate rival. It is not on occasions of this kind that man shows the better points of his character, and of all other nationalities the Englishman then exhibits to the greatest disadvantage. There is a rough brusqueness that very frequently manifests itself on such an occasion as an embarkation, thoroughly characteristic of John Bull, and not at all likely to dispose those who do not know him, to love him. Now, while the worthy Briton is growling, and frequently using stronger language than

polite, a Frenchman would approach and ask a light with a dozen *pardonnez's*, or tender you a cigarette. The course pursued by the citizen of *la belle France* is, in my judgment, to be preferred. Why is it, then, that a certain portion of our community will not try and combine courtesy with independence? It could easily be done, and without trouble, as far as I can see. Before the ship commenced to haul out, a more miserable hour could not have been spent; and, worse than all, wherever you deposited your now drenched and thoroughly uncomfortable body, you, without the slightest intention, got in somebody's way. My friend bore it stoically, but I fear my early military education just gave sufficient irritability to evince that there is a margin over which it would not be safe to go. At length innumerable bells began to ring; there was a vibration throughout the ship's length; immense hawsers, rivalling in thickness boa-constrictors, were made fast to the donkey-engine, and the giant vessel commenced to move on her long and possibly perilous voyage. I say immense vessel, for although not equal in size to the new crafts of the Cunard line, such as the *Bothnia* or *Abyssinia*, still she was three hundred and forty feet long, with capacity to stow upwards of three thousand tons. It always has been a surprise to me how such a gigantic, towering mass can be warped out through a narrow dock-entrance with such wondrous skill: the explanation is that every one employed in the process knows his work, and does it, and how little disturbance there is during the performance! Go on board a French vessel, and learn the difference. There every man seems to have a say in the matter; and how volubly do their tongues

go, and with what emphasis, shrugs, and gestures! Yes, we understand these things better in England; our sailors are sailors, while our late allies are a cross between the marine and a mountebank. At last Gravesend is reached, where the adventurous friends take their departure; again the hugging, shaking of hands, and kissing, are repeated; the bells again ring; a long line of humanity, like an army of ants, passes down the gangway; the screw revolves, and our head is soon pointed oceanwards—the first act of a drama in three acts having commenced. The lady passengers—yes, and many of the male ones too—seemed to have resigned themselves to the anticipated attack of sea-sickness, so sought their berths; thus we were well down Channel before the slightest conception could be formed of the large living freight we had on board. What a blessing it is not to suffer from *mal de mer*! My friend, not being so accustomed to sea-life, felt uncomfortable, and thus I did not tease him with my conversation. If there is one thing I glory in, it is a voyage down the Channel. Never for a moment are you out of sight of subjects fit food for thought, and speech too; for our coast-line is wondrously pretty, and there are few portions without an historic reputation. Drake, Frobisher, and Raleigh have sailed over the very soundings through which we are now ploughing. And what change and contrast have taken place through the introduction of machinery for the propulsion of our ships! Which school made the best sailors I fear is a subject none will dispute. In the distance looms up the Wight; and what a fleet of vessels, large and small, seem to find it difficult to get farther to the eastward! Truly, varieties of rig and build can be seen in our waters.

The first we pass is a Dutch galliot, all resplendent in brilliant-coloured paint. She looks more like a plaything than ought else. Yet there are few safer sea-going vessels in the world. Some years ago, when doubling the Cape of Good Hope in 42° south latitude, when it was blowing so hard and fiercely as it knows so well how to do on that inhospitable ocean, one of these galliots, probably not over two hundred tons, was in our company for two days. Although the vessel I was on board of was a large transport, the little brilliantly painted Dutchman to all appearance was making better weather than ourselves. Their crews are, as a rule, most able, hardy sailors, worthy descendants of him who first mounted the birch-broom at the foremast-head. Next in our course, and close by, is a French lugger, also a weatherly craft, which has most probably seen many a heavy blow about Ushant and the Channel Islands; but how different does her crew look! That old man with the weather-beaten face, dressed in scarlet shirt, and his feet shod in *sabots*, must be the *bonâ fide* Johnny Crapaud, and how he sucks at his pipe, from long use burnt as black as coal! How many pounds of tobacco, could any one tell, has it taken to accomplish this? A youth, evidently learning some of the mysteries of fishing-net manufacture, an untidy lad at the tiller, and a very vociferous, unknown breed of dog, apparently make up the entire crew.

But here comes a different type of craft. Forty years ago, if sighted in the equatorial portion of the Atlantic, she would have been suspected of carrying ebony; as it is now, she is only a harmless fruiterer from the western islands. That she can sail, no one who looks at her spread of canvas, clean run, and taut rig,

can doubt; but I fear, if this easterly breeze hold, it will be some time ere the good people of London have the pleasure of eating her oranges.

Large as we are, we are slipping through the water at a wonderful pace, yet so easily, so apparently without exertion, that one marvels to himself how quickly vessels are overtaken and left hull down by us. On the port beam a smart, tidy, three-masted, schooner-rigged steamship, pronounced by adepts to be of the Cork and London line, expresses an evident intention to cross our bows; but she has calculated without her host, for our craft has it all her own way, and the little one has to give place and go astern. Many accidents occur, many valuable lives are lost, and noble ships sunk by such attempts as this; though, after all, one must not be too severe on our sailors. They may occasionally make mistakes and cause danger; but if you want a specimen of the regular dare-devil type of reckless, thorough disregard for their own and other people's lives—if, in fact, you want a new sensation, and one to be remembered—take a trip down the Mississippi when trade is brisk and opposition companies have boats upon the same route. On such occasions I have known it a fact that the furnaces have been fed with fat, and it was said that the safety-valve was tied down with a crow-bar or a couple of niggers!

That night, our second after leaving London, there was a slight attempt to get up a *réunion* by the main hatch. Lighted pipes glowed around that part of the deck, while thirsty souls at frequent intervals, and in rather mysterious manner, stole down to the precincts of the bar. A few days will alter all this; passengers will become sociable and drink together; the rich will

become generous; while those less well off will try their luck at the intricate and highly interesting game, "Tommy Dodd," and by it decide who is to be victim.

Those who possess yachts, or who have large revenues, know our coast so well that even to speak of beautiful Dartmouth may not interest them; but all are not gifted with the sinews of war, and by far the largest portion of our population have not seen, possibly cannot imagine, the beauties of Devonshire and Cornwall. I do not allude to the female beauties—and they are wondrously brilliant and well-bred looking—but to the counties themselves, which possess a wealth of foliage, a brightness of vegetation, a greenness of hill-sides, truly astounding. And then within their area what snug little valleys—nooks without rivals for the picturesque resting-places of cottages and villas—are to be found! Here is the land for the old storm-tossed mariner, or the worn-out hero of a hundred battle-fields, to repose. And how many sailors and soldiers know it, and make it their retreat when cognisant that age is hurrying them to their last parade! The little country churchyards of these charming counties too ominously tell this tale. But why feel sad on the subject? They have but paid the debt all have to pay, and possibly it is a consolation to know—more so, I suppose, to relatives than those directly interested—that their last moments will be passed in their own land, and their last resting-place be under its verdant sward or fern-covered turf.

At ten in the morning we steamed into Dartmouth harbour; I had heard of its charms, but all description comes far short of reality. On its water was not a flaw

of wind, while many a snow-clad yacht floated on its clear blue surface.

The old town, situated along the upper portion of the bay, was quaintness itself—more foreign than English—and recalled vividly my recollection of Nagasaki, in Japan. But it was not with it the attraction ceased, for such glorious rocks guarded the entrance to the harbour, all honeycombed with the most fantastic nooks and grottoes that human eye hath seldom rested on, while the tendrils of numerous creeping plants waved in festoons over them. Oh! those lovely parasites! fit ornaments are they for such a place; for assuredly, had Lurline and her nymphs chosen these haunts for their home, they would have woven them into wreaths to adorn their snow-white temples!

CHAPTER III.

MY FELLOW-PASSENGERS.

Our *Cuisine*—Reminiscences of Olden Days—Plum Duff—A Yarn—An old Acquaintance—"The Plunger"—Mr. Holly--The Clergyman—A *Pilau à la Chinoise*—Mr. and Mrs. Crommy.

FROM Dartmouth to Madeira is act the second. During the five days' run I may hope to get some little insight into the characters of my *compagnons de voyage*.

With a smooth sea, gentle western wind, and brilliant sun, we left the coast of England, all, without dissenting voice, auguring, from such a successful start, a prosperous passage. But what does it matter whether it blows high or low, great guns or little ones, as long as we have so fine a ship beneath us, free from deck-hamper and such-like *impedimenta* too often placed on board by illiberal and unscrupulous owners? No; she is truly a splendid specimen of Clyde architecture, with a crew and officers one can, without hesitation, feel confidence in. The table has already given proof of its excellence, and no abatement in this respect is anticipated by me, for I discover the *chef de cuisine* is an acquaintance I knew in China to be master of his art, and there are cows, sheep, and pigs on board in abundance, and turkeys, geese, ducks, and fowls innumerable, for him to practise his skill upon. How different is all this from twenty years ago, when the

old sailing-transports were in the habit of taking four months to get to China, and the only port *en route* touched at was Anjer, on the Straits of Sunda! Many a poor fellow had to feed in those days, for weeks at a time, on hard tack and plum duff—mysterious creations of the cook's galley that do not come before the passenger-traveller of the present period. But, speaking of plum duff, I can safely assert that the dark-coloured objects that were inserted in it were not always raisins, for raisins I never knew to possess legs.

I once heard a story—well, we have got to sea, for Ushant is on our bow, and after we pass it the Bay of Biscay is before us, and there is no place so conducive to spinning yarns as board ship on broad ocean. The yarn goes in this way:—Competition ran so high in steam-boat traffic on the Hudson, that owners not only carried passengers free, but provided them gratuitously with meals. A thrifty, parsimonious man deemed this an opportunity not to be lost, so he travelled incessantly between New York and Albany. At last he attracted so much attention that the daintiest viands were reserved for less public characters. How strange familiarity should breed contempt! We are aware that no one is a hero to his own valet. Thus the worthy man suffered in silence for a time, till the invariable indifference of the food caused him to remonstrate. “Mr. Steward,” he said, “I have put up with flies for currants, but hang me, sir, if I stand black-beetles for plums!” and the steam-boat owners had in future to grieve over the loss of a patron.

Good weather and smooth seas made Morris all right, and he became one of the sociables. This was

much assisted by my finding a dear old friend, late a lieutenant in the navy, among the passengers, who took to him at first sight. No wonder he and I had yarns to spin, and many not without a spice of the ridiculous; for we had met in the Crimea, knew half the ports in the Mediterranean, and visited lands many miles farther distant. A better fellow never broke biscuit, nor did a merrier laugh than his ever sound from a gun-room. He was the *beau idéal* of the old school of sailor—short, stout, and weather-beaten, with an eye that ever twinkled with fun.

We arranged, with the kind permission of the captain, to sit at table together. An uncouth wretch thought that he would interfere; but when he witnessed the wrathful eyes of the Laird, and the combined disapproval of the navy and army, he shut up, wishing, doubtless, he had been within the boundaries of his distant farm in some out-of-the-way part of the Old Colony. Another character worthy of notice was christened the "Plunger." I do not know that he had ever been a heavy dragoon, still he had much horse in him. The wonderful stories he would tell! but where the points of his jokes came in was ever a subject of dispute—our naval friend insisted at one place, the Laird at another, while a third thought the narrator had only been selling us. The Plunger was also heavy on politics; he was not a Liberal, as I understand, nor was he Conservative, nor did he belong to the intermediate party. He had all the leading men of the day a little mixed; one of his extraordinary mistakes being that Brigham Young was President of the United States, and that Mr. Gladstone had died of tetanus. Where he got his information—as he invariably shut up all disbelievers or questioners with the mere

assertion of the facts—never transpired ; my authority for this is indisputable. Even some of the clergymen—for we had fourteen, I believe, on board—tried hard to correct his errors ; but briefly and positively he declined to be converted. Another of this gentleman's weaknesses was to think that he was an excellent vocalist ; and when night shrouded us in her sable mantle, he would lie on deck, among rugs, and croak most dolefully, surrounded by other passengers who preferred the *dolce far niente* in such attitudes. During such *réunions*, we were invariably astonished to hear some untruthful person, or, at least, I hope, some person with extravagant powers of imagination, exclaim, "By Jove, I have lost my liquor." "No—you don't say so!" would exclaim another ; adding, "I only replenished it a minute ago." "No wonder," would add the Plunger ; "is not that your glass in the scuppers ? If you will be so careless on board of ship, what can you expect ?" It would be well for me here to say that it was soon after discovered that the Plunger had a knowing way of appropriating his neighbour's grog, and then getting rid of the glass. It was strange that this excellent young man always got quarrelsome early, and had an objection to the use of sea-legs, or any other kind of legs, when assisted to his bunk.

But the greatest of all characters was Mr. Holly. For some days after starting he did not put in an appearance, indisposition and great depression of animal spirits being reported as the cause. However, as he was mated with my naval friend, and they slept in the next cabin to myself and the Laird, I had opportunities of studying Mr. H.'s ailments. The disease was different from any I had seen before—his tendency being to sleep

without clothing, and sing "The Red, White, and Blue." This was the only song, to my knowledge, he ever attempted, nor did he ever get beyond the second line. After that there was a pause, when, with a sudden yawn, or rather snort, he would evidently become conscious that he had forgotten or neglected something, and again start with, "Three cheers," &c. &c.

He was a good companion to have in the next bunk; for you were ever kept sufficiently wakeful to be first in the boats if collision or other fearful accident should chance to occur.

Oh! Holly was a jolly fellow; fought the Basutos on the side of the Boers, distinguished himself in sundry raids where cattle were to be captured. Jumping horses and bullocks were the most perfect pleasures of his life, and fighting the Boer or Kaffir he took them from, for friends and foes were the same to him, was only adding piquancy to the joke. Holly was a confirmed smoker; his mouth must have been like a kitchen grate, fairly encrusted with smut; and even when asleep, there was the pipe, out, of course, in its accustomed place. There was one point on which he was grand—that was loyalty. "The Queen, God bless her, right or wrong! if you don't believe in her when she's wrong, well, you are a confounded traitor, sir; I should like to have your company to a quieter part of the deck." That he meant it, too, was most certain, and he would have challenged on this point the whole ship's company, with the passengers thrown in. It was grand to see him attack the man who made himself disagreeable in arranging our dinner places, afterwards discovered to be a Poundmaster; he did it so urbanely, a gentle but playful smile illuminating his face, and a charming buttonhole familiarity

characterising his address. But the "keeper of stray cattle" was not to be caught, and poor Holly was ever left lamenting.

I have mentioned the number of clergymen we had on board. They belonged to every sect and denomination, and doubtless were all sincere, earnest men. One—a curate going out to Bloemfontein—I liked immensely. He was a gentleman by birth and education, charitable, warm-hearted, energetic; the Episcopalians having service every morning in the saloon, he read prayers daily, and I do not think I once missed attendance during the whole voyage. However, there was one reverend gentleman I did not take so great a fancy to; and that I had grounds for doing so all will acknowledge, when I state the following fact. The cook had obtained permission to make a *pilau à la Chinoise* for me. I helped myself, and was handing it to my companions, when the enemy stole up from the foot of the table unawares, seized the dish and carried it off in triumph. Still, there might have been time for a *coup de main* rescue if prompt steps had been taken, but we were all too much surprised to attempt anything till the whole—enough for six Grenadiers—was divided between himself and wife. It is but right to say he was a Dutchman.

Certainly, in all my previous experience, I never sailed in a ship with so many oddities—we overflowed with them; and they were good-natured withal, and at times intensely amusing. It would be scarcely fair to pass these good people without mentioning a loving couple who sat opposite us at table. Their names were Crommy—and the wife was all the name expresses. Report said she had been married four times, and that

she was quite forty; but, whether or no, the playful way these turtle-doves fed each other was quite enough to make the most obdurate bachelor eschew his evil courses and obtain a help-*meat*. Mrs. C. had her fingers covered with diamonds: these came from the Diamond-fields, where they had been taken from the craws of fowls served at a refreshment-room she kept. The wife looked out for the husband more energetically than the husband did for the wife. And how the provisions succumbed before their joint attack! We, our trio, that is, always had a plate of olives after dinner; Mrs. Crommy thought that they must be confections of extraordinary excellence. The plate was accidentally-intentionally left within her reach, and the result was that neither of the Crommys liked olives, if judgment could be pronounced from the spluttering they made.

As some of the above persons may appear again, this is my excuse for introducing them. To the many good, kind-hearted gentlemen and ladies from whom we both received unremitting attention and information on all subjects necessary to our success on our intended tour, I can only here offer sincere thanks, on behalf of my companion as well as myself, and there is one of whom I can say no more than express a hope that prosperity and happiness ever be her attendant angels.

CHAPTER IV.

FROM MADEIRA TO THE CAPE.

A Charmed Island—Madeira from the Sea—Its Foreign Aspect—Old Buildings and Their Inmates—New Blood Wanted—Land Sharks—Its Horses—Teneriffe—A Splendid Picture—African Memories—"Whales!"—Experience Teaches Whales—Porpoises, Bonito, and Skip-Jacks—Amusements on Board Ship—A Death at Sea—Holly redivivus—The Plunger's Little Game—The Poundmaster's Ignorant Insolence—Table Bay.

AFTER a most prosperous run across the Bay of Biscay, and an equally smooth sea along the coast of Portugal, on the fifth day we sighted Madeira at sunrise. The ocean was calm as a mirror; a few fishing-boats lay idly for the first flaws of wind to take them to their moorings, while the warm russet-tinted hill-tops told that autumn had come, and that the grain had long since been garnered in its stores. The nearer we approach this charmed island, the easier is it to distinguish that the water's edges possess a fringe of verdant colour as bright as that of Devonshire, while the white houses and villas call the observer back to Staten Island, in New York Bay, early in June. Madeira is, truly, wondrously pretty; it is a priceless gem in the setting of an ocean of blue enamel. But it does not always look so fair, for the placid sea that now kisses its shore can, like the angry Southern woman, smite with cruel blows the object of its love. Look! even now upon that beach lie the remains of what has been a noble steam-

ship. With what skill and strength were her ribs riveted together; what fabulous power possessed her engines; and her spars—those tapering, graceful firs, broken at the cap—have they never braved the tempest in the forests of Maine, or on the banks of the ice-locked fjords of Norway? Ay, have they, and the graceful deer have fed beneath their green feathery plumage. The squirrels and birds have made its boughs a sanctuary, and now the cruel sea, in a fit of wrath, has utterly destroyed them. Ocean, lovely in your rest, fearful in your passion, how unforgiving are you to the poor ship that is in your angry hands, although you may have bathed her sides with your caresses and nursed her on your bosom!

However, to-day is calm, and we are promised some hours ashore, to do the sights so well known to every naval officer in our service, and after having done those sights, bring off as much fruit as the chosen of our fellow-passengers can consume.

Madeira is truly foreign; the black youths that dive for your spare silver, the garrulous crews of shore-boats, the tawdrily-dressed officials, and last, though not least, the wondrous bum-boats, stocked in every nook and corner with cage-birds or immense stores of semi-tropical fruits, go indisputably to prove the fact. Again, when you land at that disreputable ratan structure called a pier, for the use of which a fee is charged, and you advance into the precincts of the town, well might you think you had dropped into Spain when that country was at her zenith of prosperity. In the town there are no new houses—at least, very few. Who now would dream of building such wondrous balconies, or expect to see the light of heaven through such

extraordinary windows? No—all is quaint, and speaks of former dates; everything is mouldy, and tells of the past. I like old buildings when they are ruins, or, at least, uninhabited; but to live in them, to have no light, no ventilation, no comfort—never! Besides, insects, scorpions, centipedes, and tarantulas, all swarm in such places; and no wonder, for they are fit only for such inmates. But with this condemnation I only desire it to be understood that I should not wish to reside in them; still, the buildings interest one much, and take one back to a time when bold deeds won heavy rewards; when fair dames and courtly cavaliers rode together, hawk on hand; when lordly demesnes had lordly masters; continents still were to be discovered, unexplored seas yet to be navigated.

The Almada of Madeira looks as old as the trees that gird it; the houses that surround it are doubtless as antique. The past is whispered ominously, the future not foretold. Is it ever to remain thus? What a world of good a small infusion of American blood would do to such a place! Have our Transatlantic cousins found it out yet? I guess so; it is not many places that they are not cognisant of; but what a difference it would make if one could see some of the pretty faces, equally prettily dressed, and the most perfectly gloved and booted ladies in the world wandering through those dreamy labyrinths of streets, that look now as if they had the plague-spot deeply indented on them. Again, the hawkish, hungry-looking men that follow you as the pilot-fish does the shark, to chisel and swindle you out of all they can—to steal, if not in act, at least in thought. It is time, I think, these choice spots of earth should be rescued from the curse of such a popu-

lation. The only thing to put a visitor in good temper was the fruit-market and hotel; the former was attractive from the lavish display of such numerous varieties of fruit; the latter from the courtesy of the hostess, the attention of the servants, the excellence of the *cuisine*, and last, though not least, the beauty of the garden overlooked by the terrace.

There is one more thing I ought to praise—when the dumb creation are concerned, I would not willingly neglect them—that is, the horses; all barbs, from Mogadore. This breed of horses I have had much experience of, but never before did I see finer specimens of the race that claims our Godolphin as a worthy member. The chargers of the *Chasseurs d'Afrique* are ponies compared with the horses here, and have not half the stamina; and my only regret was that they had such *smitch-like* masters.

A good dinner, a long stroll in the garden, with an immense supply of fruit, brought the time for embarkation; and nothing prevented our getting comfortably on board our good ship, but a playful tendency of our friend the Laird to pelt the numerous parrots with green figs. These birds hung at all convenient places, while the representative of the Land of Cakes all the time expressed his belief that they were coo-coos. I may have looked on, but I was not a *particeps criminis*.

What a stock of comestibles had been brought on board in the shape of fruit, &c., during our absence! The ship almost compared with Covent Garden. It was evident that we were not to be starved during the remainder of the voyage; and fortunately so, for in a day or two we experienced tropical weather, when fruit is ever most acceptable.

Often as I have seen Teneriffe, I never saw it in such perfection as on this occasion. Not a film of cloud kissed it; the giant peak stood out distinct and unimpaired in outline, while the blue, cloudless heaven formed the most charming background to its warm sky-line. A boat or two, and those distant, dotted the water, so they did not interfere with the glorious repose of the scene. Fairy-land may be decked in silver, with the green of the emerald and the pure lustre of the diamond, still it could not surpass God's picture, for a more perfect combination of colouring could not be imagined. In the lake districts of Scotland, after a long warm day, when the cattle are standing knee-deep, and one herd lows across their watery resting-place to another, and the trout are rising, leaving their splash undisturbed by wind and wave, and the swift and swallow dip up their insect prey with skilful swoop, and the ravens are winging homewards their way to mountain fastnesses, I have seen a tip of hill—the smallest possible portion—illuminated with this ruby-gold flood of light, but it was a miniature compared to the picture that was now before us.

This is a wondrous fair world at times, but the traveller, the weary soul who pants for rest and finds it not, sees its grandest perfections. That great and good Providence, who keeps our feet from wearying and our heart from failing, doubtlessly has thus ordained it, to help the poor wayfarer to follow the path to the bitter end.

Teneriffe far now to the north, let us look in the direction of that great land that lies on our western bow. It is a long way off, it is true; still, few do not know more or less about it—how many hearts it has broken,

how many noble men done to death! We have passed the northern boundary of the tropics. The latitude is 18° ; and what memories does this locality recall? Poor Mungo Park! Who is there that, when a boy, has not read his writings, and, with sorrowful heart, felt for his sufferings? And who has not among his young admirers dropped a tear when he came to the passage where the poor black woman brought him food? for the solitary white man had no friends. And again a little farther south, poor Winwoode Reade laboured, and farther on still Clapperton, Denham, and Lander. Yes, Africa has taken many, will still have more, and yet not be satisfied. That west coast is a hard, cruel country to the Anglo-Saxon. Could you navigate some of its bayous or creeks, thread your passage through the intricate mangrove swamps, see the giant hideous crocodile reposing on mud-banks reeking with fever and miasma, you would at once say it is no place for the white man. True, it is not; and although I once craved to be an explorer there, the task must now pass to younger hands—less able, certainly, to be spared, and more capable of bearing the brunt. No, no, not now, but to the radiant south I am bound—where the pellucid Zambesi, and no less clear Limpopo push onward their way, and seek to mingle their waters with the Indian Ocean.

When unusually quiet on deck, and the heat had made all more or less languid (I could not help thinking in the foregoing strain, for Africa is no new land to me, and I have carefully studied its history), and while in this brown study, a cry of "Whales!" was raised, and all with one accord rushed to have a look at the mammoth monsters of the deep. All the forenoon

we had been passing through fields of sea-weed, and that extraordinary yellow stuff designated by the sailors "whale-spume" was floating around us. What it is composed of I do not know, but imagine it is immense collections of diminutive squid; and of one thing I am certain—that whales are almost invariably seen in the vicinity of this spume.

At least thirty or more whales on this occasion must have been in sight; and if ever creatures appeared to enjoy life and take the world easy, they do. The very blowing noise they make seemed like a grunt of approval. The captain, who has been many years at sea, came up to me while watching them, and stated, that experience of steamers has made them far more cautious than formerly; for that, in his younger days, he could remember almost striking them with the stem. Here we have it that whales profit by experience; but as for man—that paragon of perfection—how many lessons are thrown away upon him!

Since we left Madeira, flying-fish have been unusually numerous; and to-day they are even more abundant, and consequently porpoises, bonito, and skip-jacks are having a high old time among them. All must know that the first belongs to the whale family, are warm-blooded, suckle their young, and are not fish: while the former of the two last is but a giant mackerel, known in the Mediterranean as tunny-fish, in the St. Lawrence as horse-mackerel, and in mid-ocean, by sailors, as albecore. They are beautifully marked, very active, and extremely powerful in the water, and possess the characteristic minor fins between the lower dorsal fin and tail. The skip-jack is also like the mackerel, but slimmer in build; however, it does not possess this characteristic

of the *Scomberidæ*. A "Portuguese man-of-war" has also been constantly in sight. What a strange little creature it is, with its ruby-tinted sail!—resembling a miniature boat, the ship of some diminutive sprites who have stolen away for a sail upon the golden-sheened element! What a world of wonder we live in, and how little do we understand it, after all! and where are its astounding freaks so wondrously exhibited as at sea? To view these extraordinary works, if man will only think—but that is the point: who thinks?—must make him less earthly than he is, and draw his heart closer to the great Creator.

Fine weather and favourable breezes still stop with us; we have had amateur theatricals, *tableaux vivants*, readings, and lectures on board. It is surprising how time flits by. In fact—there can be no question on the subject—this is the voyage now to take for pleasure; for although twenty-two days seem a long time to spend at sea, everything passes so harmoniously and so regularly, that the traveller can scarcely trust his memory when he finds that he has been so long absent from home. To invalids, I feel convinced the voyage would be most beneficial, and it requires only to be more extensively known to become more practised.

Sailors' ingenuity is certainly most wonderful: to see the flush-deck abaft the gangway turned into a theatre or reading-room, with flags of all nationalities shutting out the night air, and resplendent stars of bayonets, and other glittering and handsome devices, arranged and ready for use in the short period we are at the tea-table, certainly has a look of enchantment.

Mr. R. M. Ballantyne, the author of so many successful boys' books, gave us this evening (sixteen

days out) a most instructive lecture on the Hudson's Bay Territories, where he spent many of the early years of his life. The lecture was illustrated by sketches from his own pencil—admirable and graphic in the extreme. One drawing of Tadusac, on the St. Lawrence, and another of a log-cabin on the snow-covered margin of a small lake, took me thousands of miles away, to where I had once shot the moose and cariboo, or tracked poor bruin to his hollow-log home.

A death occurred this day on board. The unfortunate was sent to sea too late to save his life; although every attention had been given him, and his poor wife was more than unremitting in her attention. At half-past ten in the morning the ship had her engines stopped, for the funeral obsequies. The beautiful, solemn service over the dead was just commenced when an immense shark rose to the surface, from under the counter of the ship. Fortunately the poor distressed lady did not see the monster, or her feelings could more easily be imagined than described. But, strange as it may appear, such things do frequently happen at sea. Can a shark smell a corpse, as the sailors say? Why not, then, the pigs and sheep constantly slaughtered for food?

Holly has become once more very musical—that unfortunate song has been done to death; and as his grog has been stopped, it was imagined that, in proportion to the decrease of the distance to be traversed, his spirits had risen; but such turned out to be mere theory. My naval friend had laid in a stock of Madeira for acquaintances at the Cape; but, alas! his perfidious fellow-passenger, with a nose as acute for liquids as a pointer's for a partridge, discovered the treasure, lubri-

cated his throat with it so frequently, that its machinery became sufficiently oiled to enable him to revert to his old source of amusement.

Great indignation has been vented on the Plunger; steady seas and level keels make no excuse for erratic tumblers to upset and roll down into the scuppers; so his quondam associates keep him at a distance when they are resting with glasses within reach. How well this man would have suited the Governor of North Carolina, who so feelingly and touchingly informed the Governor of South Carolina that he was too long between the drinks! The Southern States and not South Africa is his place.

The Poundmaster has also distinguished himself. His daughter or niece was asked by a gentleman to sing, one evening; the answer was more explicit than polite: his girl was not going to sing for the amusement of a pack of snobs! The *père* has consequently been "cut" by the men, and the poor little girl "sent to Coventry" by the ladies. This is the first evidence that we have had of temper; but was a long voyage ever got over without that discovery?

On the morning of the twenty-third day, to the joy, possibly, of some, but to the deep grief of many, Table Mountain was sighted; and as no table-cloth draped it, we steamed slowly up the bay, and two hours afterwards were comfortably docked.

CHAPTER V.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS OF SOUTH AFRICA.

Holly joins Us—On the Look-out for a Coaster—Our Plans Altered—We purchase a Wagon—A Visit to Rondebosch and Constantia—A Private Garden—South African Pick-me-up not to be recommended—Adieu to Cape Town—We reach Port Elizabeth—A Funny Lot of Visitors—The Poundmaster exposed—Port Elizabeth—The *Florence*—East London—Its Dangerous Roadstead—First Sight of Game—Arrival at Port Durban—Its Bar—A Day Lost in Sight of Land—Preparing for Our Journey—Port Durban—The Upper and Middle Classes—The “Smart” Men of Durban—A Splendid Ride—The Best Drivers in the World.

HOLLY, who had become wonderfully attached to Morris and myself, insisted on joining us in our trip up country ; he could speak Dutch, and professed to be an expert in the management and driving of cattle, two accomplishments we might find more than useful. As he was really not a bad fellow, and neither of us could resist his appeals—for, after all, we could urge nothing against him but his thirstiness, and it struck us forcibly that the Great Thirst Land was, of all places in the world, the one most likely to suit his complaint—we consented, on the condition that he promised faithfully and soberly to perform his task. Again, it was a great advantage to have a third white man with us, who would take charge of the wagon at night, if Morris and myself were detained shooting at water, or had gone so far in pursuit of game during the day as to be unable to return to our encampment. Again, he was a stalwart, powerful man, unquestionably brave, and accustomed for years to velt-life.

Morris and myself had settled, before starting from England, that we should disembark at Cape Town, then procure a small coaster, and sail direct to Walwich Bay, on the west coast. On me all arrangements devolved; but although every dock was hunted, advertisements inserted and read, not a craft suitable to our purpose could be found. True, there was a small steamer running up to Port Nolloth, in the desolate regions surrounding the copper-mines; but there we would be no better off than where we were, for many and many a weary mile through the most trying sand-doons must be passed before we reached where game could be expected. Again, I heard, through a trustworthy source, that the missionaries* a few days inland from Walwich Bay would not sell cattle to persons coming there for purposes of sport, as it took the ivory-trade out of their hands, drove the game farther from their residences, and unsettled the black population by creating in them a desire to go and do likewise.

So thus early and most unwillingly we had to alter our plans. This was the more inconvenient, as our baggage was all booked to this port; so that, being entered on the manifest of the ship, it would require to go through the Custom House before it could be transhipped. The officials were most obliging, and, with the kind assistance of the agents of Messrs. Donald Currie and Co., our first annoyance was bridged over. This was not done without a lot of bother; for I never leave to another what I can do myself; thus I was on the dock from the moment cargo was broached till the hatches of the coasting steamship were closed. I forget exactly how many packages we had—over twenty, I

* These are Swedes or Danes. None of our missionaries trade; at least, I never saw or heard an instance of it.

think, with some loose lead in bars—and I was fortunate enough to escape any loss. Here we bought our wagon; the builder of it was a friend of Holly's. It cost a hundred and ten pounds, including dissel-boom, yokes, treck-tow, and keys, and in every sense of the word it was quite worthy of the price paid. So large a conveyance had to be taken to pieces before putting on board the coasting-steamer, the tent part being very bulky and cumbersome. As freight is charged by measurement, the cost of shipping it to Natal was twenty pounds. This certainly appears a great deal, but I am convinced that both captain and agents would much sooner have sailed without it; for I suppose if heavy weather had occurred, there would have been no other course than to heave it overboard.

Being once more free from care and anxiety, I turned to to enjoy myself, and see the wonders of Cape Town. One of our fellow-passengers, long a resident at the Cape, had given us an invitation to pay him a visit at his country residence in Rondebosch. As two ladies, also passengers, were anxious to avail themselves of a similar invitation, Morris engaged a handsome carriage, with four excellent bays, and sitting beside the formidable-looking Malay coachman, tooled us out in grand style.

Rondebosch and Constantia, from old experience, I knew to be very pretty; but never conceived that I should see such a view as could be had from our host's gardens. It was Marapossa County, California, come to life in South Africa. Table Mountain, as it overhangs Cape Town, is bleak; but here all was green and verdant as our fields in May. But to return to the garden; I do not know that I ever saw a more beautiful

one—the choice and variety of shrubs were wonderful, many being natives of sub-tropical climates. Vines, oranges, and almost every variety of fruit, grew in the wildest profusion, and the extent of all this ran into many acres. There were several ponds, a rivulet, and pumping-machines, explaining how this wealth of vegetable life was kept in such a healthy condition; and to till the soil, weed, prune, and perform other gardening functions, sixteen Hottentots were employed. Wines of the choicest vintage, some so old that I am afraid to state their age, did much towards shortening the journey homewards; while pontac and soda, strongly recommended by Holly, failed to put me in a serene state of mind next morning. When you visit the Cape, avoid vineyards and wine-tasting, and above all, never take the advice of an Africander on the subject of what you ought to imbibe in the morning as a pick-me-up.

Although I enjoyed myself exceedingly, and received much hospitality in Cape Town, the hour for departure was most acceptable. With a dark, black, threatening sea, and lowering, searching wind, we started, and, ere reaching Simon's Bay, commenced to regard a heavy southerly gale a moral certainty; but the weatherwise were disappointed, and those who from ignorance kept silence were at once credited with the most critical observation. Mossel Bay was passed in the evening, and at break of day the long stretch of yellow sand that surrounds Port Elizabeth was in sight. No sooner had the anchor dropped than the vessel was fairly stormed by friends and relations of the passengers; and what a funny lot most of them looked—for I believe the majority were from small towns up country. Their manners and dress were horseyish; but where, oh,

where, reside the tailors that constructed their garments? I trust so far inland that they may for ever be unable to trouble other and older lands. The appetites these locusts possessed were fabulous. I have seen some tall feeding in the United States, but here it was taller. Everything and anything was on the same plate—sweets, pickles, meat, and fish, all to disappear, regardless of order, into the same capacious maw. Here Morris discovered the missing link of Dr. Darwin—possibly that eminent *savant* would like to know its whereabouts, but if M. be wrong, the error is excusable.

Among our passengers was a young lady, fair, stout, and good-looking; she had been sent out to order for a young man who contemplated matrimony. I will not mince matters, but acknowledge that she did flirt just a little on the voyage.

When at Cape Town the gentleman, my naval friend, took his departure, a *wee* diamond tear stood in each of her eyes. Coming up from our last port, I tried to show her a little attention, but she would not be comforted. With the invaders arrived her future husband; for, let me add, they had never met before, and as a matter of course the poor child was anxious to see what one who was going to bear so near a relationship was like; but when the two were introduced I shall never forget her expression—it did not augur well for a continuance of connubial bliss. And to make matters worse, some meddling busybody sent an anonymous letter, telling of the shortcomings of his love while on the voyage. To the Poundmaster was attributed the writing of this document. However, whether fairly accused or not, it was just such an act as all believed him capable of. The biter being bitten is no false adage, and soon after it was verified.

A boat came alongside the ship; in its stern-sheets was a young, good-looking, well-dressed man, with the inevitable crop in his hand. On reaching the deck the stranger met many old friends, and he was affably conversing among a group of them, when his eyes lit on the Poundmaster. In a moment his countenance changed; rage, indignation, and hatred were all expressed, and with a most forcible objurgation, he called out, "By jingo, if that is not the Poundmaster of Bedford," and with the spring of a tiger-cat rushed at his prey. But the other was too quick; in a shot he doubled round the companion-ladder, in and out among bales of goods, ultimately seeking shelter in the hold. The race was not in this instance to the swift, for the pursuer was too heavily handicapped by at least three friends hanging to the skirts of his coat. Naturally, this episode created no little curiosity, and an explanation was asked and granted. Nor afterwards could we wonder at the anger displayed by the new arrival; nor will the reader, when he learns that the Poundmaster was detected driving in this gentleman's work-oxen from their own pasture, to incarcerate them in the pound. Verily, they do strange things in the frontier-towns of South Africa.

The last we heard of the Poundmaster was that Holly gave him a kick to accelerate his movements as he went over the gangway. We thought this a summary proceeding; but when it was explained that he passed himself off on the worthy Holly as a wealthy farmer and merchant, and thus induced him and persons to associate with him who would not be seen in his society even at a bear-bait, we could scarcely resist believing that he only got what he merited.

Would you believe it? this low, worthless scamp was almost the only grumbler on board the ship. Food, stewards—in fact, everything—he found fault with; yet “what can you expect from a hog, but a grunt?”

The *Florence*, in which we were prosecuting the remainder of our journey, not being yet in sight, we had time to take a run on shore. Port Elizabeth is a brisk, pushing, prosperous business town, prettily situated, and ornamented with many handsome buildings. Among our late passengers, we had become intimate with many who called this home. If we had accepted half the invitations given to us, we must have remained a week instead of a few hours, and one fair friend would have induced me here to spend a life.

At the Phoenix Hotel, an excellent house, we said our last adieus, and drank a *deoch-an'-durass*, and as the boat bore us from the beach, I could long see a tiny, well-gloved hand waving the most gossamer pocket-handkerchief in token of farewell. But it behoves us to hurry: the *Florence* looks impatient, and Captain Jones is not the commander to lose time. As we approach, we discover the wagon-tilt is safe, for already we had felt grave doubts on the subject. And at this stage of the proceedings it would have been a most serious loss.

Ascending to the deck, we find ourselves on board a yacht of about 600 tons, for as such the *Florence* was built. She was purchased for her present traffic on account of her light draught of water and sea-going qualities.

We find that through the captain's kindness a most comfortable cabin has been allotted to our private use, with Holly installed next door. This can scarcely be

considered an advantage, as he has been doing "The Red, White, and Blue" with more than usual vehemence, and more or less variations; but he is as irrepressible as the nigger was said to be in America. Let others judge and think of him as they like; to me he appears a big, kindly-hearted child, incapable of overcoming his one great failing.

East London, our next anchorage, is very pretty at this season; the hill-sides were beautifully green, and here and there studded with white tents and covered wagons, the property of persons who have come from the interior to enjoy the luxury of sea-bathing. But what a dangerous harbour or open roadstead it possesses! Look at the surf even now, when there is scarcely sufficient wind to move an ostrich plume, and tell me where you have seen a more difficult landing. In a south-east gale it must simply be terrific. Cargo-boats do not delay here; they must make their hay while the sun shines, for no one knows what a single hour may bring forth. Even while we gaze on that dreadful snow-encompassed beach of surf, there is a yell on shore, echoed from the ship, for a large whale-boat with six men in it has capsized. I believe no lives in this instance were lost, but it is painful to witness how feeble and puny are the exertions of the strongest human being when placed in such a position. East London, I have stated, is very pretty, but, like the careful mariner, I would sooner give it a wide berth on the seaboard.

Lying close along by the coast of British Kaffraria, our good little ship rapidly carries us to our destination, Port Durban. The shores are not elevated enough to be termed grand, but they are exceedingly attractive, and in many places diminutive cascades of fresh water tumble

down the cliffs. Here and there, in the distance inland, Kaffir kraals can be detected; and on one vast grassy plain, sparsely sprinkled with brush, game of some kind—I should suppose *wildebeest* (gnu)—were to be seen.

The first sight of these animals warmed the heart of Morris, and already he saw himself, in thought at least, in full chase. But what is that proud, bold promontory almost dead ahead? It is where the signal-station and lighthouse stand, marking the entrance into Port Durban, perhaps the most difficult harbour of all on the east coast, on account of the bar. This shore is terribly deficient of shelter from the prevailing winds, and, although its seaboard is so long, only two safe anchorages can be found—Saldanha Bay, to the west of the Cape, and Delagoa Bay, in Portuguese territory.

Before getting to our moorings, for we had to anchor outside, the harbour-master having reported the bar impracticable, we ran through immense schools of albacore. Soon lines were out and many hooked, but all exertions failed to bring one on board; like their relatives, the mackerel, I believe them more powerful than any other fish of their size.

More than a day lost, with nothing to do but march the deck and discuss whether the bar is worse or the reverse. Towards sunset there was an improvement in the weather, and to our great relief the tow-boat was seen getting up steam. As it was Sunday, we had afforded no small amount of amusement to numerous loungers on the beach, who seemed to think our plight was a capital joke. But the tug came, bump, bump, bump, and, thank Providence, we are again in deep water. It does not take landmen, hungering for *terra firma*, long to get on shore, and a drive of three miles

brought us to our hotel in Durban proper. Here terminated our sea-voyage—truly a most enjoyable one—and here our most adventurous land one commenced. Leaving out the convivialities of that evening, I will enumerate what business had to be performed on the morrow, for all who follow in our wake will have to do likewise.

An invoice of your baggage is handed to the custom-house authorities, a permit obtained to land your guns, which being granted, also goes to the customs, where each barrel is stamped and a pound duty paid on it; there is an import-duty also charged on wagons.

First it was intended to purchase oxen and horses here, but the prices were so exorbitant that we resolved to hire a team of bullocks, yoke them to our own wagon, and thus get our traps to Pieter-Maritzburg. At length, after repeated failures, I secured the services of a Boer to accomplish the task for ten pounds sterling—about half what all others had demanded. Still, we were paying too much; but necessity knows no law. Before leaving Durban, I would say it is a very pretty town, essentially tropical in all its characteristics. To many of its merchants we were indebted for great kindness—in fact, their hospitality is proverbial. If, on arrival, we had called upon any of them, and requested their services, they would have at once stopped the numerous extortions attempted—alas! several times successfully. But, having referred to the honourable men who compose the upper class, save me from falling into the hands of such Philistines as make up the middle grade!

Mr. Robinson, delegate for the colony, and editor and proprietor of the leading journal in Durban, whose acquaintance I had the pleasure of making, would, I am

convinced, be glad to give advice to any English gentlemen; and the novice could not possibly be in better hands.

I am not a bad-tempered man. I have travelled much, am accustomed to roughing, and have had to associate with all classes on terms of equality. The Yankee horse and cattle dealer I deem smart; the Canadian one smarter; but the Durban breed—if those I came in contact with are a fair sample—are confounded swindlers.

But, to leave the disagreeables, early one fine morning we found ourselves on the top of a cart, with four almost unbroken horses and a reckless but splendid driver. By Jove! it made my old heart young again to note the pace we covered the ground. Accidents sometimes happen by this mode of conveyance: but, whether or no, it is well worth the risk. My friend was in like mind with myself; we chaffed and chatted, fed and smoked, never tired of admiring the swelling, undulating green hills and grander coppies. The country deserves all praise, and its future must be great. The white-necked ravens that sat so tamely on the roadside gave us especial pleasure; there was something so absurd in sombre, sepulchral ravens, each possessing an exactly similar white necktie. But the summit of our enthusiasm was reached when the last team was put in harness, previous to dashing into Pieter-Maritzburg. Which were the more thorough scoundrels, wheelers or leaders—for all kicked, reared, and bucked—it would be hard to tell; however, the Zulu boys at their heads hung on to their respective charges till the word to let go was given; and the style in which we went down that hill and over the next few miles of velt was simply splendid.

The men who used to tool the overland stages to California could drive: I thought in this specialty the American beat all her gracious Majesty's subjects, but this day I felt grateful to have, thus late in life, the error removed from my mind, and more grateful still when I considered that Uncle Sam's experts could be beaten by our common niggers. Do not misunderstand me. I love the American people for their courage, endurance, and enterprise; but that is the very reason I like to beat them. What credit is there in winning a race from a cart-horse, or beating an effete, worn-out old man in a sparring-match? From the distance the view of Pieter-Maritzburg is very pretty, the red-tiled, white houses contrasting beautifully with the brilliant green poplar or willow trees; and when we halted at Mr. Prefer's Hotel we found that the town, if possible, improved on closer inspection.

CHAPTER VI.

MR. PREFER, OF PREFER'S HOTEL.

A Week of Laughter—Mine Host—An Oddity—His Peculiar Way of transacting Business—Prefer's Nationality—"All Mine, all Mine"—Pound your Cattle—Various Purchases of Live Stock—I ride on to Howick—A Fearful Storm—Summit House—Howick—Its Loveliness—No Wagon—A Chapter of Accidents—Holly dismissed—Zeiderberg's Team—Reach Howick at last—Catch a Cropper almost.

PIETER-MARITZBURG, the political capital of Natal, I shall never forget, for the reason that I laughed more there in a week than I ever did in a month. Much of this merriment was owing to our host—not that he was ever ungentlemanly, but the reverse. He presided, in grave dignity, at the head of his own table, and discussed with great good sense local politics, the topics of the day, and little scandals that constantly vex society; but when you became acquainted with Mr. Prefer you discovered that he possessed a deep vein of satire and great comic powers. He also must have been a man of study, for he professed to speak Zulu with the proficiency of a native. I certainly heard him, on numerous occasions, when a great, powerful, handsome native was bounding past, shout out, "*Housy lapa!*" What it meant, I knew not, but it had a visible effect on the native, who always afterwards seemed for many minutes to pursue his course a sadder if not a wiser man.

Like all geniuses, he transacted his affairs after a

manner of his own. The hotel especially was witness of this; for whenever business or pleasure called him abroad, he would invariably ask the first of his guests to go and take care of the bar, dispense the beverages, and do what he liked with the cash-box. Such a man could not be narrow-minded—impossible that he could be so is written plainly on the face of what I have said. Still, the following playful little incident took place; and how well it proves that all men are mortal—that the great mind is subject to infirmities as well as the lesser, that the best-balanced head may forget as well as the fool! Mr. Prefer felt thirsty; so did one of his guests. The weather was sultry, so champagne was decided on as the most suitable beverage, and it was resolved to toss who should incur the cost of a quart bottle. Our host was without ready money: wealthy men are sometimes, clever men are frequently, but brilliant men are invariably impecunious. Thus Mr. Prefer borrowed a sovereign to toss with: fate was against him, and he lost. This struck him as worthy of thought; and his giant brain became absorbed in a deep study of the inscrutable perverseness of the fickle jade Fortune. However, he was recalled to the existence of the outer world by the pop of the cork. I have known many instances of deep and erudite thinkers being called to their material state by a similar means. The champagne was cool, brisk, and possessed of good *bouquet*, and therefore went to that bourn from whence little champagne returns. Suddenly, business called our host away: the returning of the sovereign mattered not at the time; the visitor could get credit for it in his next bill.

A few days passed, and settlements had to be made,

when, to the surprise of the guest, he found, as an item in his account, a sovereign loaned to toss with, and ten shillings for wine lost on the occasion! Several were acquainted with the circumstances of the case, and when the *dénouement* came our mirth was hilarious. It was one of those peculiar things this great genius could do without any one blaming him.

About our host we had another quaint story. When Germany was supposed to be a power of no importance he was residing in one of our colonies where all the inhabitants were English; so he resolved to be a subject of our gracious Queen. For thirty shillings that privilege was accorded him. After that, in different localities to which he was called, he became a Scotchman and an Irishman; for the first he paid one pound, for the last two shillings. He was now happy; who could say that he was not a Briton? What potentate had a lien upon him but the monarch "whose flag has braved a thousand years the battle and the breeze?" But the blast of the tocsin of war bellowed throughout Europe—Germany and France were in arms to destroy each other, and, to the surprise of many, Mr. Prefer in particular, the former great power conquered. There was grief in his heart for what he had done; would he not sooner belong to the great Teuton race? Yes, certainly! So he wrote to the English, Scotch, and Irish officials to whom he had paid the various sums, with a polite request that his money might be returned. To his great surprise no answer has been received, not even up to the present moment. "Ah," he used ever to apostrophise, "the English Government do know how to look after No. 1."

Well, we were most comfortable at his hotel, although we used occasionally to take wine with him

at his own request, and be charged with it afterwards, or asked to take a seat in his carriage to visit his country estate, when you were safe to find a bill from the livery-stable next morning. The first time I drove with him we traversed miles; every few furlongs he quietly and seriously murmured, "All mine," and by the time I got home "millionaire" was no term for the affluence I believed him possessed of; but the stable-boy at bath-time tendered me the bill for horses and carriage. From that time forth my eyes were opened, and I saw things in a new light. To leave joking on one side, his charges were most moderate; nothing was a trouble that he could do to serve us, and he was invariably courteous, and ever entertaining. The eccentricities I have alluded to deserved no other name. In our selection of cattle, horses, &c., he aided us much, and prevented us from being imposed upon. I repeat I like Mr. Prefer, and if I do wrong in narrating these tales of him, my excuse is that it mattered not who was present he told them of himself.

Holly, about whom I have lately been silent, continued to sing with almost additional vehemence, "Red, White, and Blue;" but as our cattle must be bought, and a start made, it became necessary to make him pull himself together. At length he selected a team of black Zulus at ten pounds a head. Without exception they were very handsome and in excellent condition. For safety they were nightly placed in the pound, for which a small sum is demanded. This should never be neglected, and it ought to be one of the golden rules engraved upon the mind of the up-country African traveller. At Durban I had made several offers for horses, but the vendor would listen to none,

but asked such exorbitant prices that I was obliged to defer obtaining mounts till our arrival here. As luck would have it we found the string of nags had been removed up here, and were to be sold by auction to the highest bidder; thus I obtained two for the price I had offered for one. These animals had been bred north of the Vaal river, and were supposed to be saulted, hence my anxiety to procure them. From another person I bought a large, well-made chestnut, warranted saulted and an experienced game killer; twenty-five pounds was the price paid for this beast, and a greater brute never looked through a bridle. I had also picked up from one person and another about a dozen dogs, several of which were half-bred greyhounds, the rest of the pack were arrant mongrels. Neither had Morris been idle; he had taken in hand the commissariat department, and hours of each day he spent indefatigably selecting stores and seeing them packed.

While here we had formed numerous friendships, so numerous in fact that our rooms were never empty. Some were persons I had met before or heard of, but all were unquestionably a most gentlemanly lot of young men; a little lax possibly, a little dissipated certainly. Everything having been procured, the wagon packed, the oxen bought, and the horses and dogs standing at the stable of the hotel, one Sunday evening, at dusk, I determined to ride eighteen miles on our road, to the hotel of Howick, and there wait for my companions, for at daylight the cattle were to be yoked, and under ordinary circumstances we should all dine together at three or four o'clock in the afternoon of Monday.

As a matter of course I had never been to Howick before, and just as it got dark I started from Pieter-

Maritzburg. The town hill I reached, ascended a mile or more, and then the rain commenced to come down in torrents. The higher I advanced, the worse became the storm. The thunder rolled with its deepest and most powerful voice, from the mountains above; while the lightning cleft its way down, down into the almost unfathomable black valleys beneath. It was a truly fearful night; and if I had gone over the scarpment, nothing but utter destruction could have been the result. Still my little horse, a bay Basuto pony just over fourteen hands, toiled manfully on, and higher and higher, steeper and steeper, became the road in this Alpine region.

At length the slope became such that I dismounted, placed the reins over my shoulder, and trudged, best foot forward. The little horse behaved admirably, and even thus early I would not have sold him for double what he had cost. A long, long mile more, and I came to a shanty called the Summit House; here I refreshed the inward man, and obtained the satisfactory information that a few hundred yards would bring me to the top of the pass. The mouthful of gruel I gave to the little nag put fresh life in him; so I threw my leg over the saddle, and rode the remainder of the journey; the only accident that occurred being his falling over some boulders in a bad, rough rivulet called Reed Spruit.

Howick is a beautiful place; it stands on the margin of the Umganey river, which, about one hundred yards from the hotel door, goes over a perpendicular fall of nearly three hundred feet. My head would not stand the ordeal of approaching the margin of the abyss, so I crossed to the opposite side of the ravine, and had a

look at the cascade ; and I say, without hesitation, that it is one of the most attractive I have ever seen. The water was low when I visited it ; if the river is in flood, all those I have heard speak of it, and are capable of giving an opinion, pronounce it under such circumstances very much grander. Round the hotel are planted a number of Australian blue gum-trees ; their height is now over fifty feet, although only seven years old ; but the landlord complained that he believed they attracted lightning. Grapes, tomatoes, and other fruit, also grew in abundance around the establishment, in fact, in such profusion that I wonder the Pieter-Maritzburg people do not select Howick for a summer residence.

At the hotel here I met a capital young fellow, engaged in surveying and mending roads. His tent was pitched on the other side of the river, and as I remained waiting for the wagon, I spent much of my time with him. He had not long left home, and complained bitterly of the loneliness of his position. His labourers were all Zulus. This people are, without question, a splendid lot of men, and, I believe, faithful and well-disposed when properly treated.

At length my patience could stand it no longer ; if the mountain would not come to Mahomet, Mahomet must go to the mountain. So I got my horse, and started to find the wagon, determined to stick in future to it through thick and thin, and, even now, filled with regrets that ought had induced me to leave it. Holly was not trustworthy, Morris was unaccustomed to roughing it in the strongest sense of the word ; so I must take the helm and remain there, if I wish to go forward.

Half-way to Maritzburg I saw Morris, to my joy ;

he was on the big chestnut, but no wagon was in sight. Soon we met; and what a series of misfortunes had happened! First, a bridge had broken through with the wagon's weight; next the dissel-boom had smashed, then the treck-tow; but, worse than all, the oxen had ultimately turned rusty, and refused to pull.

There and then I wished to go back, to see whether I could prevent any further casualties, but he insisted that we should both return to Howick, for the wagon would be there to-morrow, as he had made arrangements for a regular teamster to tow it up the town hill.

But on the morrow no wagon came, no message, no nothing; so I took the big horse—a most footless, dangerous brute—and turned back once more to Maritzburg. How it poured till I reached my destination I never shall forget, and Reed Spruit was flooded almost to my horse's withers; still I was determined to get to the wagon if in human power to do so.

At one o'clock I reached it: inside Holly was drunk, incapably drunk, the cattle scattered all over the place, the poor boys he had hired without food, the dissel-boom unmended, and worst, though not least, the Basuto pony left in his charge broken-kneed, the skin off its hips, and cut in several places over the head.

This was too much to stand: the cup of my misery was too full; so that we might henceforward be subjected to no more misfortunes produced by his carelessness, the delinquent must feel my wrath.

The last I saw of the cause of all this misery was a crestfallen and very much in his own idea injured man, on foot, tramping it to town, not whistling or singing "the Red, White, and Blue."

The cattle were then sent for. When they arrived, the leaders, the most valuable animals of the whole team, had been lost or stolen. In England they probably would have been found; in Natal, seldom; not that the people are less honest, but that the country, from its rolling formation, is so admirably suited for concealing them.

Decision and action were the only things that now could save us, and promptly I acted. A dissel-boom was made, the treck-tow mended, and, after hours of labour, I induced Mr. Zeiderberg to bring one of his strongest teams of treck-oxen, place my beasts in the yoke with them, so as to have fourteen couple before the load, and thus, in spite of wind and weather, reach Howick to-morrow. That night I laboured as I never did before; the rain descended in torrents, and the red clayey soil filled up the wheels from hub to tire, making them solid. Again and again we halted from sheer exhaustion, or with the knowledge that the cattle were fairly worn-out. An hour past midnight we reached the summit, and outspanned amid a perfect war of elements. Sleep none of us could; the soil was a quagmire, and no fire could be kept lighted. Soon after break of day the cattle were again put in the yoke. Mr. Zeiderberg and self had some grog and a biscuit, the boys bread, and we managed at much risk and no ordinary amount of trouble to ford Reed Spruit. Here we again outspanned, and breakfasted. At half-past two in the day the wagon was at Howick. We were all worn-out, even the cattle; but plenty of food and rest had done much to restore us to our accustomed spirits and strength before evening. For this service we paid Mr. Zeiderberg three pounds; he drove the

whole time himself, and proved well what a determined man can do under adverse circumstances. As to me, I was of little use. I was quite inexperienced in such modes of travelling, but I learned more that night than ever I expected to in the art of bullock-driving.

While at Reed Spruit an oriby antelope crossed the path. All the dogs started in pursuit. Zeiderberg jumped on his horse, and we both followed. The ground appeared fair enough for galloping, so I tried the chestnut's speed, which proved that he could go. When some way ahead, and nearing the buck, I heard a voice call out to me to stop. This I disregarded, and immediately after my careless mount put his fore-feet into an ant-bear hole, and floundered on his head. Fortunately, I did not go farther than the ears, so managed to regain the saddle, this exploit bringing me a cheer from four or five passengers on a post-cart that happened to be passing at the time close to the scene of my discomfiture.

CHAPTER VII.

SAULTED HORSES—YOKE-OXEN—MY ATTENDANTS.

Horse-Sickness—Where found—Season of the Epidemic—Its Racial Effects—Symptoms—Value of Saulted Horses—Death of a Horse from this Disease—Suggested Remedies—Lung-Sickness—Proposed Cures—Leading Oxen—Hints for the Proper Care of Oxen—Dental Surgeon, *pro tem.*—I extract the wrong Tooth—Difficulties about my Attendants—Suspicious Cattle-dealers—Their Little Game—Caution to Travellers—How Missionaries get on—Umganey—Jim—Imp—The Interpreter's Speech—A Secret Benefactor.

I HAVE alluded in the previous chapter to salted—or, more correctly, *saulted*—horses; and as those unacquainted with African travel may be ignorant of its meaning, the expression so frequently occurring, I will endeavour to give an explanation of it.

North of the Vaal river, particularly on the banks of the Limpopo and in many of the regions beyond, horse-sickness prevails to a frightful extent. I have known one hundred horses from the Free State driven to Bamanwatto, with the hope that five or six would “sault,” but all died. The consequence of this is, that a horse worth about six pounds in the Free State will fetch from a hundred to a hundred and twenty pounds among the Bechuanas, and a hundred and fifty pounds in the Matabele country. The season when this epidemic rages is from December to June; but, strange to say, if an animal once gets the disease, and recovers, it never has it again. A horse is then called “saulted,” the expression being of Boer origin. I also learned from Mr. Mackenzie, the missionary at Soshong, that

the progeny of a saulted stallion and a saulted mare suffered less, or were less likely to die from the disease, than animals imported from other regions. Again, if the foal should have two generations of saulted ancestors, it will have the complaint in a very mitigated form. Instances are occasionally known of horses not having the sickness the first year, but that gives no assurance they will not have it the second; in fact, the life of no horse that does not sault is safe during the months already mentioned.

When a horse takes the sickness, or at least shows indications of it, thirty-six hours will terminate the matter one way or the other; if the unfortunate animal is alive after that, experienced persons would pronounce an opinion, or express a hope, that the creature was going to sault. When such is the case, the animal must not be worked for many months, but must receive superior food, and be blanketed or housed at night. As a rule, horses that are saulted are easily known, for their coats stare in large flea-bite marks, especially about the neck and withers, and on the flanks. Between the jaw-bones, close up to the windpipe, there is a large perceptible swelling, the eye loses its lustre, and the creature evinces a disinclination to violent exercise. A saulted horse is thus always sluggish and careless, and must be ridden on a sharp bit and with severe spurs. What causes horses to be so much valued in the countries so fatal to them is, that nowadays, since fire-arms are comparatively common in the interior, elephants have become so wary and savage, that stalking them on foot is extremely dangerous and arduous; whereas, if you have a good horse, they are easily overtaken, and their attacks avoided.

If, with a valuable saulted horse, you kill six or eight good elephants in a season, and you should lose ultimately your nag by *tsetse*, or beast of prey, his price has been doubly, probably trebly paid. I have heard persons state that saulted horses were impervious to injury from fly-bite ; this is an error, and a very misleading one.

I have been at the death of many horses that died of horse-sickness. The symptoms in each case were the same : a dull, lustreless eye, with great puffiness over the pupil ; a staring coat, extreme restlessness, lying down one moment and getting up the next ; a marked desire to be in the society of its master, at all events, close to the wagons ; griping, coughing, and ultimately death ; and in the last struggle—the very last, I may say—an immense quantity of a white frothy substance comes from either nostril, covering the ground in front of the mouth for the distance of one and sometimes two feet. The pain the poor creatures suffer while ill with this epidemic is fearful, and their groans can be heard for several hundred yards, if the atmosphere be still. I do not profess to a knowledge of anatomy, but in all carcasses that I have opened, the entire liver, lungs, and heart denoted acute inflammation, while the last organ was soft and flabby.

Many, and myself among the number, cannot help thinking that this disease is caused by some vegetable matter, not procurable at other seasons of the year. Mr. Thomson, of the Backwan, concurred with me, while Mr. Mackenzie and Mr. Hepburn thought differently. Innoculation has been recommended, but, I fear, not sufficiently adopted. Mr. Hobson, a very large and successful breeder in the Eastern Province of the colony,

had many discussions with me on the subject, and expressed great faith in it. Horse-sickness is known in other parts of the country than those mentioned by me, but not with equal virulence.

The lung-sickness is another disease that prevails in these elevated table-lands: it is among oxen what horse-sickness is among horses, and I am inclined to believe is equally unknown as to cause. In lung-sickness inoculation, I am aware, is largely practised, while others laugh to scorn that treatment. I have seen many drench their calves with a decoction of the virus. My stay in the country was not long enough to allow of my ascertaining results, but I have no faith that such an antidote can be beneficial.

Thus, in purchasing cattle up the country, either horses or oxen, it is customary to obtain a guarantee that a horse is saulted, or an ox over the lung-sickness. With such a guarantee, if either should die within a year from the complaints named, the sum paid can be recovered at court of law; but the word of black men will not be received, only that of white witnesses—no easy matter to obtain beyond the pale of civilisation. But now that the Transvaal is annexed to the British Empire, that law may possibly be altered.

In alluding to the loss of my leading oxen, I characterised them as the most valuable. This is not a form of speech, but a fact, and I will point out how it is so. When a number of young oxen are going to be broken to the yoke, their places are allotted them according to the opinion the “herd” has of each beast, and a Kaffir or Hottentot who has once had his attention called to an ox never forgets it, or any peculiarity of habit that may distinguish it. In this respect the

Boer is very nearly as skilful. Those that are selected for leaders—bell cattle—are the most active, most intelligent, and at the same time the most mischievous, their success in villainy being the result of intelligence. Watch wagons outspan, and see, as soon as all are loose, if the water be distant, who takes the lead to guide them to it—the leader probably, or possibly an after-ox. The reason why an after-ox should do this is that he in all likelihood was a leader till lately, and only got placed next the dissel-boom because age had increased his weight, strength, and experience. Oxen that have worked much together have a great dislike to their places being altered at the treck-tow, and a good driver, knowing this, punishes refractory beasts by giving them a change. Again, all oxen have their names, and know them as well as a dog does, and should invariably be addressed by them.

Two more days, a period of almost unceasing rain, were spent at Howick in mending gear, repacking, and getting ready for a fresh start.

Now that we had got rid of our late companion, Morris and I had to depend entirely on ourselves, and it was a capital initiation in the troubles that were before us. But the constant wet had produced its effect upon both, he suffering from fever, I from incessant tooth-ache of the most acute description. At length I could stand the pain no longer, and although the offending tooth was a large double one, I borrowed a pair of forceps, and after a most determined and protracted resistance extracted the supposed guilty tooth, much to the astonishment of all who were aware of the operation I was engaged in; but as luck would have it, I soon learned that I had made a mistake.

Our attendants, all Zulus, who had without exception been engaged by Holly, were a most inexperienced lot, and consequently very unsuited to our work; possibly if they had been in the employment of skilful drivers they might have been licked into shape, but we were deficient of the necessary ability to do so, therefore we weeded them, retaining only two, one a foreloper, and the other a kind of useful lad, half cook, half body servant.

If Holly had taken the most simple precaution, or the advice that had been offered him, he would have gone to the Government agency, and we should doubtless have obtained suitable men, and at proper wages; "but a wilful man must have his way," professing, as he did, that he knew all about Kaffirs—that at sight he could tell a good one from a bad one—he had engaged all the worthless scum that were idling about Maritzburg, looking Micawber-like for chances to turn up. Thus we were without a driver—the most important person of the party. From Howick we sent word in all directions—to Kaffir kraals and neighbouring villages—that a driver was required, and that, to a competent person, large wages would be paid. Still no candidates presented themselves; the season was slipping on; our horses were eating their heads off at livery, and our dogs, although well-fed, were ravaging the country far and wide to gratify their insatiable appetite.

Another feature was, that unknown and suspicious-looking cattle-dealers were ever unexpectedly arriving at the hotel, and miraculously disappearing from it; but I soon learned the business of these worthies—it was to prevent our obtaining aid, make Howick the termination of our African trip, and force us to sell off our posses-

sions to the highest bidders. Thus many a well-fitted-out and costly expedition has been ruined before, and doubtless many a one will be in time to come. When at Maritzburg, a message was sent me by a Mr. May, to say that he and friend were almost ready for the road, and as their wagon was light they would overtake us in a day or two; but we never heard of them again. In fact, I have reason to believe that they broke down almost before they started. These harpies that here retard the stranger believe they have a right, conferred on them by residence in the country, of fitting out every wagon starting for the interior, so if the traveller does not buy from them his oxen, engage from them his people, the only chance they see of bleeding him is to throw such obstacles in his way as to cause him to be disgusted, and in a fit of spleen throw the whole thing up.

It may very justly be asked how the missionaries, whose funds are generally very limited, manage to reach their up-country stations. The answer is simple. In South Africa the missionary societies are very powerful. At the sea-ports from whence their emissaries start, they have droves of well-broken cattle, or know where to procure them; have numerous tried and faithful drivers and forelopers, so that the young aspirant to the honour of converting the heathen steps into his wagon as a gentleman into his carriage. "*Amaga, treck,*" shouts the driver, crack goes the big whip, and off they go. I do not mean for a moment to imply that these good men do not have troubles; but these do not occur till they have proceeded far on into the interior.

However, to return. I had resolved that on I would go, in spite of all the apparently insurmountable difficulties that barred my path; but the delay and worry

had made me nervous and impatient, several times causing me to fear that a fit of sickness was impending.

In the meantime I had engaged another boy. He was the poorest and most miserable Kaffir I had seen, scarcely possessing a scrap of clothing, while his skin was of that bluish-grey hue denoting bad health. For a day he had hovered round our men's flesh-pots; but there was evidently no sympathy felt for the outcast. At length out of charity I gave him some food. Such a look of gratitude lit up his countenance, and it was a face which, under other circumstances, would have been deemed attractive, that I resolved to take him with me, provided he could give a satisfactory account of himself. It happened that Mr. C., one of the magistrates, had come to Howick that day to settle some Kaffir disputes, so I got one of his interpreters to interrogate the starved-looking lad. Poor fellow! he had come on foot from several hundred miles up the coast in search of work, in which he had been unsuccessful; and as he was among strangers, he was reduced almost to the verge of starvation. When informed where I was going, he said, "Yes, I will follow the *Bass* to the land of the Matabele, and back again to Zulu land." The price of his services was to be fifteen shillings a month, and food; if he behaved and made himself useful, he should have more; in the meantime he would have to forelope, Master Jim, who had hitherto performed that duty, being promoted to the rank of assistant-driver.

This Jim was a merry, devil-may-care kind of fellow, always with a grin on his face, a tremendous feeder, and a great lover of tobacco. To see him smoke was a treat, for he could blow a cloud twice as big as any other man I know. Our third hand was still the lad that cooked;

in age he might have been anything from forty downwards, stood about five feet nothing, with a shockingly ugly face. To this last circumstance he may attribute the name he received, namely, Imp. From the first I noted that the poor wanderer, whom I christened Umganey, after the neighbouring falls, was far from well received by his future companions ; so, having the interpreter to assist me, I determined there and then to put a stop to any attempt to treat him unkindly. The interpreter made them a powerful speech, reminded Jim and Imp that they belonged to Maritzburg, and would be punished on their return if they misbehaved ; and wound up by assuring them, that in the Boer's country their only safety was in sticking to their master, and agreeing among themselves.

As a treat, each received a couple of inches of Boer tobacco : from that moment Umganey was as good as the best man among them.

My difficulties I narrated to the good magistrate with whom I had become acquainted, and I have ever since been under the impression that, unknown to me, he used some influence he possessed to enable me to renew my journey, for that evening I succeeded in making an arrangement with a resident to treck the wagon to the next halting-place, about fifteen miles off, and nearly all up-hill.

CHAPTER VIII.

BREAKS-DOWN ON THE ROAD.

Treck-tow Smashed—Treachery—For Hire—Reinforcements—On the Move at Last—Another Delay—On the Road again—A Long Three-miles Ride—Difficulties of Getting to the Game—Hints—Sunday Peace—Mine Host—A Canny Scot—Mr. Currie comes to Terms—Our New Boy—Everything going right now—The Driver's Villainy—I give him a Thrashing—Skimmel-pin Broken—The Wagon seemingly a Wreck—Vexation of Spirit—Morris starts to Buy a New Skimmel-pin—Unloading the Wagon—Boers to the Rescue—A Diplomatic Palaver—Coffee and Rum—The Boers' Family Love—More *Soupe*—Help Purchased—Out of Trouble.

ALL about the comfortable, clean hotel was life and bustle at an early hour, and morning broke bright and promising. The cattle were placed in the yoke, the whip cracked, and smash went the treck-tow ; but there was a blacksmith's shop near, and in an hour the defect was repaired. Again the whip produces its gun-like report ; the driver shouts out "*Treck*," and smash again goes the treck-tow. Well, this was annoying ; it would probably cause the loss of another hour ; but that cannot be helped.

Morris says nothing, but he looks unutterably disgusted, and rides off to the hotel. I accompany the chain to the blacksmith's to see it properly welded. While waiting for this to be performed, I have the pleasure of learning that the treck-tow must have been tampered with. "Who could have been such a villain?" "Well," replied my informant, "it is not likely that this chain, which brought you up the Town Hill at

Maritzburg, would not be able now to draw the wagon on the flat." I required no further convincing.

Once more we are ready to make another effort; the magic cry is given; but my oxen refuse to pull. Then commence a series of tortures—double-thonging those that lie down, biting and screwing the tails of those that will not get up. Oh, it made my heart sick! yet what could I do but stand by and witness the handsome cattle thus cruelly treated? Several times I felt disposed to remonstrate with the driver, but I dared not; for well I knew he would have thrown down his whip, and told me, "as I did not like his ways, to drive myself."

About this time I was getting savage; my friend had long retired to the quiet of the hotel; and I felt another crisis had been reached that required prompt and decisive action. Thus I at once arranged with the driver for the services of his cattle to assist mine. They had to be sent for, as they were at pasture on the hills; in an hour the "herd" brought them up—eight powerful, well-broken, experienced oxen. Soon it was arranged that he would supply the leaders, and the yoke immediately behind them, also the after-oxen and the yoke in front of them, while four pair of our brutes filled up the intermediate space.

By competent persons it takes but a short space of time to yoke cattle—ten minutes at the utmost. Time was up: each beast stood in its place; my staff of men ready to assist; the dogs were driven out from under the wagon; when again the whip sounded; the wheels creaked, revolved, and, thank God! we were again under way. In a delirium of joy, I shouted my hardest, mounted my horse, and ordered Imp to go for Morris.

Nearly a quarter of a mile was traversed ; my friend had joined me, his face bore a more satisfied expression, when, lo ! as we turned off the velt on to the road—for no one is allowed to outspan on it—one of the after-oxen chose to be disobedient, and not turn wide enough to avoid an ant-bear hole, into which a forewheel went, up to the hub.

I took off my hat, wiped the perspiration off my face, and said nothing ; but I felt *such* agony. The day was now too far spent to do more labour ; so, unwillingly, I returned to the hotel, to enjoy a well-earned meal, contemplate my misfortunes, and try and devise how a repetition of them was to be avoided on the morrow.

With the first glimpse of the sun in the east I was up ; I and the boys long toiled with pickaxe and shovel ; but the confounded hole was so deep that hours were required to make a cutting of the requisite grade. By eight a.m. the driver had arrived ; ominously he shook his head, and informed me, to my disgust, that our labour was lost, that the screw-jack must be put under the axle of the wagon, the wheel thus gradually raised, and the hole underneath the tire carefully filled in. By noon this was done ; but the day was too hot then to start. At three the cattle were yoked in the same order as in our last effort ; but at the first endeavour to move on, the new earth sank down under the wheel, leaving it buried as if in a deep rut. When in this position the team for some time struggled most manfully, but after a time turned rusty, and refused to make further exertion.

The expert and even non-driving readers may say, “Why on earth did you not unload ?” Well, for this

reason, that our cargo, to reduce the number of packages, was divided into boxes containing from five to six hundred pounds' weight; thus to get them out of the wagon was no easy matter, but to reload was a question we scarcely liked even to contemplate.

I have spoken of a gentleman employed in surveying the roads. During my stay at Howick, I found him a good, kind-hearted fellow, who sympathised with me in my troubles; now of his own free will and accord he brought me his cattle and people. Thus fresh forces were added to our strength; and at the first struggle the unfortunate wagon was drawn on to the road, and three hours afterwards found us at the greatest elevation of this ridge, slowly moving forward 'mid drenching rain, a gale of wind in our teeth, and darkness closing on the scene.

An hour afterwards a halt was called—time indeed, for I could scarcely see my horse's head. No food could possibly be cooked, and it was a dreadful night to sleep out on the open; yet no other alternative appeared to present itself. However, the driver soon thought differently: at first he had been disposed to yield to circumstances; but afterwards found even his hardy constitution was being too much tried, so proposed that we should ride on to Currie's Hotel, which he believed to be only three miles from our present position.

It took us longer time to ride those three miles than I ever remembered to have previously required to accomplish such a distance; but how we did it at all to this moment appears to me inexplicable. The road was simply villainous, bordered on either side by precipitous ravines or flooded water-courses; while the storm howled through the impenetrable darkness. For

some distance we had to call to each other, so as not to get separated.

To the pony's eyes I trusted more than to my own; and I had no reason to regret placing in the little pet so much confidence. At half-past twelve we arrived at our destination, as sorry-looking a lot as even an African sun occasionally looks at. We had the luck to get beds and something to eat—"something" best expresses what it was.

To get to the game, not to kill it, is the difficulty in this land; therefore, to those who wish to rival that greatest of hunters, Gordon Cumming, the early part of this book is valuable; and, moreover, I do wish all to believe that in what I have said of the difficulties we had to contend with there is not one word of exaggeration, nor has aught been set down in malice. In fact, I have the honesty to confess that to myself is due much of the disagreeables that happened; for, instead of one, we should have had two wagons, and thus had our load divided. Moreover, in case of getting stuck in ruts or holes, the two yoke of cattle can be put to the unlucky conveyance.

We have all to learn, and it is satisfactory to know that, however grievous it may be at the time to suffer worry and inconvenience, the experience teaches us how in future to act so as to prevent their recurrence. To drive oxen well is no rapidly-attained accomplishment; to drive them even moderately well is only learned by attention and time; thus there are few men who go to the Cape after they have attained mature years who ever attempt to do so, unless in cases of rare necessity.

Next morning (Sunday), we did not leave our beds till late. When we did so, we found on going forth

that the peace of the Sunday rested on everything: the cattle lay on the velt across the road in pasture a foot high, while several horses stood under the shelter of neighbouring trees, solely occupied with switching the flies off their flanks. The only noisy things possessed of animal life that I observed, were the white-collared ravens. At home I have noted a like behaviour of our crows on the day of rest.

The "gudeman" was in his Sunday best, and regretted to me that he had not been able to go to preaching from the number of strangers at his house. He was a countryman (Scotch), and an old mounted police corps man: here were two bonds of sympathy; surely he would aid me, who came from his native land, and had been a member of the same profession. I felt reassured and confident that my perseverance was about to meet with its reward.

Saddling my own nag—for who could expect a groom to be found on this day?—I returned to the wagon. On reaching it, I saw the boys had made everything snug, while the bright fires at which they were cooking their meal gave an air of home and comfort to the surroundings.

However, Imp was absent. He had retraced our march of yesterday to endeavour to find one of the dogs which had been missed shortly after we had left. The animal had followed us; but it looked like zeal, so I commended the boy's conduct. At two we started, and, without mishap, reached Currie's. As I followed that road, the one we had ridden during the darkness of the blackest night imaginable, the more and more I wondered that any of our party escaped being dashed to pieces.

As the day was young, and light would last till

eight, it was resolved to treck farther; but as the Howick cattle had to return, I endeavoured to make a bargain with our host for the use of some of his oxen and a driver till we reached Mooi River. Because it was Sunday our landlord placed all kinds of objections in the way of my scheme; first the difficulty of finding his cattle, and latterly of discovering a driver—in fact, it was a job “he did na like. Na, na, man; stop where you are.” But seeing that I was resolved not to be counselled, he began to think what the job was worth, and presently asked ten pounds, paid down. The exorbitance of the demand took away my breath; so I left this good, good man, lamenting he hadn’t asked less.

In went my cattle; Jim took the whip and Umganey foreloped. The road was down-hill; and, to my own surprise, the team walked off with the load in fine style. We had thus favourably progressed about a mile, when Mr. Currie followed us up, informed us that some stiff hills were in front, and that he feared we could not get over them; therefore, for a consideration of five pounds, he would on this occasion break his rule, and send his team and driver to help us. Very soon three pair of worthless old cattle, accompanied by a saucy driver, joined us. All were put to the wagon, and again we moved forward.

The tide spoken of in the affairs of man had evidently come; my men looked pleased, the horses felt willing, and the pack of dogs scattered out and hunted on both sides of the road. This was encouraging; for it was the only respite we had from worry and annoyance. Now, for the first time, it looked as if success were not to be entirely refused us.

At Maritzburg an acquaintance had given us an old pointer bitch ; she could go, and seemed never to tire at hunting, but apparently, from her conduct, had not the slightest idea of what standing game was, for quail after quail was flushed and chased, and flushed again. This we saw and laughed at—it was game, veritable, undisputed game, and no mistake—and we both chuckled when we thought of the quantity of shot we had in the wagon, and other implements intended for the destruction of the innocents.

In taking an occasional survey of the cattle, and how they performed, I could not help noting how carefully and assiduously Umganey, the new boy, did his work as foreloper, for it is not light labour, and requires experience and knowledge. Of course there is as much difference in leaders to a yoke of cattle as in horses : the first sometimes require almost to be hauled along ; others step out so as to keep those behind them at their places, and thus a taut treck-tow is obtained. If I mistake not, I thought that evening that this new *attaché* would yet prove the best servant I had got. Careless, thoughtless Jim, when things are going on all right, is a happy dog, an adept at turning somersaults and making jokes, and this evening he was in his best form, for he had nothing to do but amuse himself and others.

As the sun was setting, both Morris and self pulled our horses back so as to get the wagon in front and have a confidential talk about the troubles we had encountered, and lay happy plans for the future ; so we had progressed for a mile or two, when he called my attention to the fact that the driver had put on the brake as the wagon went up-hill. Surely this could not be ; but, dismounting, I examined and found that it was a fact,

so I quietly undid it and said nothing, although I suspected much.

The sun must have been down an hour when we outspanned on a high table-land, Providence blessing us with a bright, calm night. We both slept soundly, and had a bath, cup of coffee, and were ready for the road by daybreak, hoping to put at least ten miles behind us before it became warm enough for the oxen to feed, which they will not do while the dew is on the grass.

Soon the cattle were in the yoke, and we started, nor had we progressed a hundred yards, or yet re-entered the road, when the ruffianly driver drove us bang straight into a large ant-bear hole. This he could not have done on the road, for there they do not exist; so as he was unable to balk the cattle on ascending the hills by putting the brake on, he resolved to bring us to a halt in this way. So effectually had the wretch carried out his plans that the fore-wheel on the nigh side was nearly out of sight, the axle resting on the earth, the sole cause that it had not gone in deeper; while the box of the wagon was lifted forward over the crutch that kept it in its place. I had neither Zeiderberg with me nor that good man of Howick, so on my shoulders alone depended our becoming extricated, and of all our former catastrophes this looked far the worse. Pickaxes and shovels were the order of the day; but, would you believe it, the cause of our difficulty refused to assist? I had no doubt that it was done intentionally, so I made up my mind that, in spite of magistrates and penalties for assault, I would make the offender work. So I offered him a shovel, and pointed to the hole: no, he would not take it.

Morris I knew was good for two of them, and possessed of all the necessary pluck; in fact, I think he would have enjoyed the exercise; and I thought myself fit to fight the remainder, that is, if our three boys espoused the cause of the offender. So again I tendered him the shovel; in broken English he coolly informed me that it was not his business, and that he would not do it. At this I swooped upon him, got him down, and pommelled him to my heart's content. Complainingly and sulkily after his punishment he went to work; the hardest parts of the task I made him perform, but I spared not myself nor any of my people, for Imp had just returned, and Umganey was not required to herd the cattle, as no cultivation or habitation was in sight.

An hour's labour enabled me to form a solid base outside the hub for the screw-jack to work on, and that wonderful and powerful instrument was brought into play. Inch by inch the wheel was raised, stones and earth were forced in beneath the tire, till the driver announced that he thought the cattle could now draw the wagon out. At the second or third effort the fore part of the conveyance came away, severed from the body and hind wheels, for the skimmel-pin had broken, and everything looked a wreck.

I believe the driver would have liked to bolt at this crisis. He looked at me and the saddled horse; in the former he did not admire the expression, and in the latter recognised that there was sufficient fleetness of limb to overtake him, and proved by remaining that he was not such a fool as to run such risks. I certainly expected him to go, and I was equally resolved to ride him down, if determination and sharp spurs could

do it. It is better that such a chase did not take place, for under excitement even the best and most long-enduring may do, in the might of their wrath and strength, what may cause regrets for many years to come, possibly even for life. How hard it is to bear the insolence of an *employé*, the wilful destruction of our property, and the almost total ruin of the plans we had made, and come thousands of miles to execute, I know ; and, further, to see the large amount of money invested in an anticipated and longed-for pleasure thrown to the dogs, is very trying. But it is best, where law exists, never to take it into your own hands, and after all this blackguard was only a tool in the service of others, although doubtless a willing one.

After breakfast, for we had not yet eaten, Morris, at my request, took the big horse and started for Mooi River (Natal), where it was known that a blacksmith resided, to get a new skimmel-pin, and, if in his power, to obtain assistance, and to be as quick as it was possible for the ugly stumbling brute to carry him—the distance both ways to be traversed being probably thirteen or fourteen miles, he would be with me soon after mid-day. I took off my coat and waistcoat, and earnestly went to work to unload the wagon, for well I knew that the box could never be put in its place unless every article in the fore part was removed. Independently of this, the floor in front of the box must be cleared to allow the new pin to be placed in its proper position.

Unremittingly we worked for about two hours, and by that time had unloaded the greater portion of the cargo ; still several of the heaviest boxes remained to be removed, and the sun was powerful indeed. My clothes were torn, my body bathed in perspiration, and

every nail of my fingers broken, and my hands blistered. This was my state when I called on all to cease their labour for a while. Chocolate was produced, in which all participated, and to this I added a small supply of tobacco.

I felt that I had earned this rest, possibly never in my life more so, and in proportion enjoyed it. But what is that I hear? the creaking of badly-greased wheels? Yes: about a mile off three wagons trecking towards me come in sight. Truly grateful I felt, for could any one, however callous, refuse to afford me assistance?

Refilling my pipe, I took my seat on the bank that margined the road, and patiently, no, impatiently, waited their approach. Bullocks travel slowly—these appeared scarcely to crawl along; fully half an hour passed before the leading one was abreast of me. I hailed its driver, and he halted, but to my disgust he was a Boer who spoke not a word of English; nevertheless I pointed to our wagon, and poured out a voluble history of my troubles: then he went and got his gun, and there stood with it in his hand. This move I could not understand. Soon he was joined by his companions, one of whom spoke a few words of my language; together we went and inspected the wreck, but when I appealed for aid they significantly shook their heads.

I had heard that the Boer was sociable and loved coffee. I ordered the latter to be made, and tendered each a cup, and an unlimited quantity of sugar: good sign—they accepted my hospitality. The one who spoke a little English, William by name, became more garrulous, and an air of *bonne camaraderie* began to

pervade the assembly. Oh, how diplomatic we become when absolutely necessary—when we find that our object is to be accomplished by no other means! After coffee each was furnished with a double *soupe* of rum about twenty above proof. They were excellent fellows, and the spokesman asked me in the name of the others for my father and mother, especially their ages, how my *frow* was, and the number of *kinderkins* (children) I was parent of.

I knew that the Boers were great lovers of children, and admired large families, so I was guilty of the deception of telling them twenty.

Another little *soupe*—they were such good men—they must take it, it was pure and unadulterated; and they complied. Again the assistance was alluded to, still there was hesitation, so I hastened to the last intelligible resource, gold, and held up between my forefinger and thumb a sovereign. It worked like a charm, the old skimmel-pin was extracted, the orifice in which it lodged was partially filled with gravel, so as to make a part of the broken pin answer temporarily, the bed of the wagon replaced in its proper position, and the front wheels removed on to firm ground. Then their Kaffirs were called up, the loading commenced with vigour, all assisted, I myself working as if life and death depended on the expedition with which it was accomplished; and to my unutterable joy I managed, after another *soupe*, to get two of my heaviest cases stowed upon their wagons.

The cattle were then put in the yoke, and, to his surprise, I met Morris just as he was leaving Mooi River with a new skimmel-pin.

CHAPTER IX.

OUR BOER ASSISTANTS—AN UNEXPECTED MEETING.

Pow-wow with the Boers—A Bargain struck—The Intimidation Game—The Cattle-dealer Checkmated—At a Standstill—In Karkloof Valley—A Meeting of Boers—Propitiatory Beverage—The sort of Men they were—The Boer—More Outlay—My After-Oxen, Ackerman and Brightman—Morris ill—In my hands—An Unexpected Pleasure—Jack Bennett—More Friends—Merry-making—Holly to the fore again—A Magnificent Midnight Scene—Bontebuck—Camp struck and Friends part.

UNDER the wall of the little church at Mooi River we outspanned for a couple of hours, and had a grand pow-wow with the Boers. To further open their hearts and win their favour to what I was about to propose, a really good dinner, cooked by myself, was provided, and we all sat down and discussed it together. William, the one who had a smattering of English, discovered that he had more words in his vocabulary than he gave himself credit for—in fact, quite sufficient to render himself intelligible. Before the meal was finished, he confessed himself to be the son of a British deserter, his mother being Dutch.

Well, we had a long confab, and our treatment had the effect of convincing them that we wished to deal with them fairly—thus soon an opportunity occurred for me to broach the subject so necessary to our success ; in fact, I felt convinced that the failure or the reverse of our expedition depended on my diplomacy and powers of eloquence on the present occasion.

What I had to propose was this: that as they were not very heavily loaded, they should take some more of our baggage, thus lightening our load by, say one ton; break up our team, taking the worthless members into theirs, and supplying us in their place with an equal number of their tried old cattle; also that they should remain with us till we reached Potschefstrom, their destination, and of course assist us in all difficulties, and allow William to drive for us (they had a spare Kaffir driver); we on the other hand undertaking to feed him, and on arrival at the journey's end to pay them fifteen pounds sterling for their services. Long and earnest was our interview. Again and again they retired to consult; at least a dozen times the whole agreement had to be repeated and explained, when, to the intense satisfaction of Morris and myself, the bargain was concluded. A *résumé*, to simplify the matter to the reader, places it thus—for fifteen pounds the most unruly of our cattle were to be replaced by good ones, these Boers were to stand by us through all difficulties, and we were to be supplied with a driver for the distance of nearly four hundred miles. Looking at it from all points, the arrangement was certainly in our favour.

I have stated that the bargain was concluded, but a difficulty arose in an unexpected quarter that nearly undid the entire arrangement. It was in this way.

To show these Boers a little attention, and further to make them feel that we wished to consider and treat them as equals, Morris and I asked them down to the hotel to drink a glass of their favourite Hollands gin. Soon after we had entered the public room and been served, mysteriously one after another of our new acquaintances was called out, and upon his return

looked crest-fallen. Again the principal Dutchman was called out; suspecting that all was not right, I followed him in a second or two, and discovered that my surmises were correct, for in the yard, in the rear of the hotel, a young man, aged about eight-and-twenty, was threatening him. In a moment I was between them, gave the blackguard in the plainest language to understand that I knew what his motives were, and carried the Boer back with me.

When we returned to the wagons, I saw that the intimidation had produced its effect; that the Boers were arrant cowards was apparent, and fear was acting powerfully upon them. Some more ardent spirits loosed William's tongue, and he distinctly told me that the Englishmen in the village—more properly hamlet—had threatened to beat them without mercy if they helped us. As I knew that a cattle-dealer who had offered at Maritzburg to supply me with oxen at a most exorbitant price lived here, I could have no doubt that he spoke the truth. However, we assured them that we were well armed, and would stick to them through thick and thin; that they had but to drive, and we would do the fighting; and that, mounted on our horses, we would not be away from them for a moment if danger threatened.

The cattle at length were yoked, all was ready for the start. I buckled on my revolver, and took my rifle; my friend carried his; and, 'mid some groans and hoots from unseen persons, the Boers in front, our wagon bringing up the rear, we descended the incline, crossed the river on the neat little suspension bridge, and commenced the ascent of the opposite hills.

These hills were very steep—wagon after wagon

toiled painfully up ; our enemies were being left farther and farther behind, when, as if we were haunted by some evil genius, our wagon came to a standstill, nor could all our efforts move it. The Boers trecked on, but promised, as soon as they got to the summit, to send us back aid. Hour after hour passed, still no signs of assistance arrived ; the mosquitoes were in myriads. Neither Morris nor I dismounted, but waited and prayed for daybreak and assistance ; the utter solitude of the long, long trying night being only broken by an occasional drunken yell from our outwitted enemies, and a fusillade of fireworks which they thought proper to let off a few minutes before it broke day.

As soon as the light was sufficiently good, my friend took upon himself the onerous post of guard, and I hurried forward after the Boers, a suspicion having arisen in my mind that, as William had gone with his comrades, possibly they might contemplate deserting us. But I did them injustice. Some miles forward I met the irrepressible William, with three extra yokes of cattle, coming down the hill to our relief at the double. By half-past eleven we were on the plateau, and outspanned, all thoroughly tired with our labour, but satisfied with the result it had produced.

Next day we passed over the lovely and rugged valley of Karkloof. Here, although I did not see them, are some pretty villas, belonging to the wealthy class of Maritzburg and Durban. The grade of ascent on the north side of the valley is very long and fearfully steep ; the skeletons of numerous bullocks on both sides of the road attesting how hard it is on draft cattle, while innumerable vultures sail overhead, at immense altitudes, doubtless earnestly looking out for accidents ; however,

we reached the top at ten a.m., where we found the Summit Tavern. Here we all had some refreshments, served by a civil, tidy young Scotchwoman, wife of the proprietor; and, further, we purchased a lot of scones, for present and future consumption.

Half an hour afterwards we outspanned in a large, well-watered valley, abundantly supplied with grass, among about thirty Boers' wagons. Long before our dinner was cooked, quite a number of these people visited us; our ways, and particularly our ablutions, appearing to create great astonishment among them. A quantity of coffee was made, and each presented with a cup. Of this beverage they all are exceedingly fond, and use with it immense quantities of sugar. Our courtesy doubtlessly put them on their good behaviour.

William informed me that we must get two good heavy after-oxen, that if not we should have great trouble in getting over the Drackenberg, in fact, probably with our weak team not accomplish it, and that now was our chance; for among the numerous Dutchmen assembled here there must be some good beasts to be obtained. Since we had landed in Natal our purse had never been out of our hands, and we earnestly hoped that now rest was in store for it. Still, if two after-oxen must be had, there was no help for it, so, at least if any beasts worth having could be obtained, they had better be sent for.

The specimens of the Boers that I saw here were very prepossessing in appearance—stalwart, fair men—often handsome in features, but invariably dirty, rude in manner—possibly resulting from moroseness—however, evincing the most earnest willingness to eat and

drink at our expense whenever occasion offered. Their curiosity also appears unbounded. They want to know where you have come from, where you are going, your purpose, the amount of money you possess, whether you have a good wife, and the age and sex of all your children, not unfrequently terminating with a desire to learn the price you paid for each individual part of your dress.

When we finished breakfast, William came with the news that two splendid after-oxen were waiting for our inspection; as I really did not then consider myself a good judge, and Morris relied on me, all purchases we made were very hazardous. I thought to get William's advice, but in this I was deceived; for the fulsomeness of his praises made me at once consider that he was in the interests of the vendor. Still, he was to drive the beasts for over three hundred miles, and if they could not or would not do the labour he required of them, he would most assuredly be a fool to his own interests to recommend bad cattle.

Two bullocks which I on this occasion purchased were with me for a long time, and therefore they deserve a word of description. First came Ackerman, a nigh after-ox, of good outline, but old—which fact I did not know then—capable of great power when he chose to exert it, but that, I am sorry to say, he did rarely; in expression he looked at peace with all the world, still never lost a chance to kick any one who carelessly approached him, and was ever prime ringleader in all mischief. The other was Brightman; he was willing, but lacked power, good-tempered, intelligent, and desirous of pleasing. The former was mouse-coloured; the latter, red-and-white. After due

haggling and fault-finding, they became our property at the exorbitant sum of thirteen pounds ten shillings each.

All past troubles are nothing to what I have to suffer to-day. My now dear friend and companion, Morris, tells me that he feels far from well. Very feverish he certainly is with a very furred tongue. Returning, when proposed, he will not hear of; so I insist that he shall keep out of the sun, and avoid the night air; ride in the wagon as much as possible; put his feet in mustard and water before retiring to rest; finally, before sleeping, have a couple of fever-pills, specially prepared by a skilled physician for this climate. There was a slight tendency to kick against my authority, but that was natural enough; however, like a good subaltern, he submitted. I have little doubt that it is one of those fever attacks prevalent in all hot climates, precipitated by the vexations and annoyances he had suffered, combined with the exposure occasioned by his night in the saddle on the low-lying grounds that bordered the Mooi River. The swarms of mosquitoes that pestered us there, and him in particular, would inflame any one's blood, and, where there was a predisposition, assist much in producing strong febrile tendencies.

My consolation is that now our men have got into very tolerable working order; consequently, there is little enough for me to do, so I shall turn cook and nurse by turns, and see that he has an abundance of good soup, with rice or barley as the vegetable adjunct to it. Still, with resolves to do all that can be done for my comrade's comfort, I feel a shudder of awe, in case anything should happen. Shall I go on, or turn back? Before deciding, I shall wait for the morrow.

Thank goodness! Morris is much better, and seems in excellent spirits. I trust this is not assumed. I have known persons of pluck play this trick if they thought their comrades anxious about them. Whether or not, he ate a good breakfast, and that speaks volumes.

During the morning trek, I was apprised by one of the Boers that some person was following us rapidly on horseback, evidently with the intention of overtaking us. I did not pay much attention to the circumstance at the time, but judge of my surprise when, a quarter of an hour afterwards, a gentleman, accompanied by an after-rider, came up to me, and held out his hand. For the life of me, I could not recollect him.

"You don't know me, Gillmore?"

"No, I do not."

"Well, that is good!"

"Do you think so?"

"You don't wish to 'cut' me?"

"But I really don't know you."

"Well, if this is not intensely funny!"

"Why don't you tell me your name?"

"Because the whole thing is so absurd."

"Is it? Well, it had better cease" (and I got rusty).

"You old donkey! don't get cross—it's Jack Bennett."

"My goodness! But who on earth would have expected to see you here? No wonder I did not know you! why, you have grown so much hair about your face that it hides every remnant of your features" (formerly he shaved *à la militaire*). "Never mind my not knowing you; I am deuced glad to see you. We will

outspan at the first water, and have as good a meal as I can produce and cook."

Morris here joined me, and both had a capital laugh at my expense; which they were perfectly welcome to, more particularly as I thought it would raise the latter's spirits, and thus do him good.

Possibly the reader would like to know who the gentleman was: there are few who don't know his father—Sir John Bennett, the well-known watchmaker. The last time I had seen Jack was three years before, on a raw autumnal morning, at Ludgate Hill Station. His cousin and I were bound for the lower portion of the Chesapeake Bay, to live on oysters, canvass-back ducks, terrapins, and the numerous good things that prolific region produces, while he spoke of a European tour, possibly to extend to Constantinople.

Arriving at Howick two or three days after our departure, Jack had followed me over a hundred miles. All along the route he learned of our advance; and at Mooi River heard me abused to such an extent that he was nearly coming to blows in my defence. So we outspanned, and discussed old friends and places visited together; it was truly a right pleasant meeting.

As he was not tied for time, after our meal we travelled forward for our next resting-place, near Bushman's River; but we had not completed half the journey when another party was reported in pursuit. We called a halt, to let them come up; and who should they prove to be but Mr. Prefer, of the hotel at Maritzburg, Captain Gregory, whom Morris and I had enjoyed many an hour with, and—shades of the departed!—Holly. I certainly long thought we had got rid of *him*. My comrade and I had congratulated ourselves

time after time on the subject, and now so far on the way to find ourselves saddled with this Old Man of the Sea: well, it shall not be—I'll leave him on the velt first!

But hospitality was our first duty; so at the next outspanning-place the cattle were released from their yokes. As grass was abundant, the poor brutes would be the better for the holiday, and thus all would benefit. Out of the sail-cloth we made a tent big enough to shelter a sub-division of infantry. The cooking-pots were got out, fires lighted, and I doffed my coat and turned cook once more. Mr. Prefer had in the goodness of his heart brought an abundance of champagne, all of which, with the exception of one victim, was sent down to a neighbouring spring, there to cool till about to be immolated.

We were all so happy—no, there was one sad one: poor Holly was dreadfully cut up at his past conduct, so much so that he could not be induced to join us. What he had done was of the past, so Morris and I determined to think no more of it, but to receive him again into the brotherhood, unless by any means such a step could be avoided. I feel that no one can blame us; for while he had nothing to do we permitted him without interference to act as he liked, but when the first call had been made upon him—after the great expense we had gone to on his account—he had betrayed his trust, and through wilful negligence, or worse, seriously injured our property and prospects.

Let us change the subject. We enjoyed ourselves to our hearts' content—to describe the merry-making on such occasions is tedious—we had enough and to suffice of all good things, and turned in at an early hour tired and anxious to court repose.

About midnight I stole forth to see that everything was in order. It was a goodly night: the heavens were without a cloud—stars innumerable covered its whole face. Beneath, a mile off, was a clear turbulent stream, rushing headlong through a rugged rocky kloof, well covered with stunted timber, while beyond stood out, solemn and grand, their outline clearly defined against the distant sky, some of the nearer spurs of the noble Drackenberg range of mountains. But the foreground I have said nothing of—its *tout ensemble* was perfect. The giant tent, white in the subdued light as that of Cræsus; the fires with their smouldering heaps of glowing coal; the bullocks, with their legs beneath them, quietly and measuredly chewing the cud, fastened by twos and twos to their yokes; and near where the Kaffirs slept, within the radius of the glow coming from their cooking-place, a dozen horses stood attached by reins to their pickets. And naught broke the silence: not the mournful note of the hyæna, not the merry whimpering laugh of the jackal—only the musical cowbell that hung from Swartland's neck, and the deep and rapid bass snore that announced that Holly was in the arms of Morpheus.

I would not for a very great deal have missed that scene. I would that others could have seen it, but not with me, for there are times when we wish to be alone. Yet I am not quite alone, for as the thought is passing through my mind, poor Bontebuck, a half-bred greyhound, and rapidly becoming a great favourite, put his cold nose in my hand. Was the dog on foot too to admire nature? or was it only affection for the master whom already he recognised through little acts of kindness to him? Both, possibly; for there is nothing

good, nay, noble, among mammalia that I am not quite willing to accredit to dogs and horses. Of course they sometimes differ, but less so than men.

After midnight it always gets cold in the highlands of South Africa; cold induces sleep, so I turned in once more, and knew not of the passage of time till the roseate clouds in the east, and the delicate rays of light coming from a common centre, and dispersing over the entire heavens east of the zenith, told me as plainly as signs can speak that another day to be added to our allotted term of life had commenced.

After breakfast our party broke up, and Holly is to remain with us. I opposed it as long as I could, Morris having nothing to say in the matter; so I had to listen to the arguments and entreaties of all. At length, sorely against my will, I consented.

Camp was struck, the cattle yoked, horses saddled, and finally came the parting. This was accomplished not without regrets, and while our late guests returned to civilisation, we pushed farther north towards Tropical Africa.

CHAPTER X.

MY FRIEND INVALIDED.

One of the Boers' Wagons comes to Grief—We arrange for a New Wheel—A Useful Hill—Wilful William—Another Smash—Our Dogs—Mother and Child—Working like Slaves—No Progress—Off for Help—Hill Cattle in Africa—Friendly English—They put us to rights—Bushman's River—Accidents to our Horse and Pony—The Superintendent of the Natal Mounted Police—Morris so Ill that he must Recruit—A Sad Meal—I Part from my Friend—Holly's Sorrow—Alone—Off for a Hunt—The Natal Partridge—Quail—The Dogs in Full Cry—Filling a Pipe: the Various Processes, hurriedly, meditatively, angrily—A Shot at Bush-buck—The Game at Bay—Bring it Down—A Warning about Bush-buck.

OUR treck commenced by descending a steep grade. One of the wagons belonging to our friends the Boers was very old, and as it made a sweep round a curve the brake gave way, and the hind wheel struck a boulder, consequently several spokes and part of the felloe were scattered in different directions; fortunately this stopped its further progress, or otherwise it would have run into all the wagons in front of it, and caused destruction of the most serious nature. On visiting the scene of the disaster, I found Hendrick sitting by the roadside consoling himself with his never-extinguished pipe, surrounded by a host of comforters; for fully ten minutes "*Mein Gott!*" was the only expression I heard any of them use. At length the wheel was examined, and it was clear at a glance that nothing could be done to it that would make it serviceable without the aid of a wagon-wright. A mile farther on, by the little river

before mentioned, resided a wright, so we consented to carry their wheel to him, then continue our trek till they overtook us. The wagon-maker was a well-to-do person, and this hill apparently brought him abundant employment. He was a hard man at a bargain, and well knew how to take advantage of others' misfortunes. The poor Boers were inconsolable when they learned that two pounds would be the charge for the necessary repairs. However, there was no way out of the scrape but to pay and look happy; and though they had no money, that did not matter; we advanced it, and so parted with Pater and Hendrick, to cover as much ground as we could before they overtook us.

That morning we made a long trek before outspanning, our halting-place being on the summit of a hill surrounded by deep valleys, through each of which ran streams of clear cold water. At one p.m. fell a short but heavy shower of rain; this delayed our trekking till nearly four o'clock. Down the incline we went splendidly, but when we attempted the ascent we found our work cut out for us. The cattle were willing, but the track was so slippery from the rain that it required all their exertions to retain their footing. By dint of careful driving we got over about two hundred yards, when an evil thought struck William—he resolved to leave the road and take the velt. I did not remonstrate, as he was the better judge in such matters. Soon the wagon was on the grass; for a short distance there was an improvement in pace; but, smash! there goes something, and the wagon gradually sank down and remained at an angle of forty-five degrees. The side of an earth-crack several feet deep had suddenly given way, leaving us in a most awkward

position, and one that it would require much labour to extricate us from. The remainder of that afternoon, William, the boys, and myself worked like navvies. Morris, who was again feeling unwell, sat hard by on a camp-stool, attending to the fire and keeping a constant supply of chocolate ready; while Holly awakened the echoes of the interior of the wagon with, not the stereotyped "Red, White, and Blue," but the most diabolical groans and grunts.

Soon after dark I got my friend to retire, and as there were now two in the wagon, I slept, or tried to do so, underneath it. The dogs would not leave me alone: first one licking my face, then my hand, and so on, till a free fight would take place among them; for Bob, a large rough greyhound I had obtained from Zeiderberg, and Bontebuck, who were pals, seemed to think that I was their undivided property, and that none of the others had the slightest right to come near me. All did not see it in this light, and one more venturesome than another would approach, when woe betide him or her, for both the greyhounds would be on the intruder in a moment! The disturbance would summon the others, and there would be a perfect Babel of yells, worries, and snaps, till the Kaffirs turned out with their jambocks, to separate the combatants.

One of the boldest and most irrepressible was a black bitch, seemingly three-parts greyhound, the remainder pointer. She had a puppy with her about six months old, the ugliest, queerest-looking nondescript in dog-flesh I have ever seen. Its body was like a greyhound's, the ears as large in proportion as a fennec fox's, and the place of a tail was supplied by a scut. This curiosity, when not stealing, eating, or sleeping,

was engaged in a game of romps with its mother, or poking about looking for vermin. Never was there a more affectionate child or parent; but however much the mother loved her offspring, in exactly that ratio it was hated by all its companions. For some unseen cause some of the other dogs would make a dash at it, when it would sing out, bringing the mother to the rescue, like a lioness robbed of her whelps. This puppy was disposed to be very friendly with me, indeed so was its dam; but I would have thought more than twice before I had dared to flog it. The black bitch was a great favourite with Umganey, and always accompanied him when herding; but he was so kind to the animals—an unusual thing among Kaffirs—that this did not surprise me, more particularly when he told William that it came from his country, his own home on the Umpholosi.

From daybreak to eleven o'clock we worked like slaves, and so little had we done that I resolved to go forward and look for aid, particularly as there was no sign of the approach of our Boers. Mounting the chestnut horse, that had done little or no work lately, I cantered over some fine upland covered with droves of cattle, from whose manner and hostile appearance I should imagine they see very little of their owners or "herds." One grand bull seemed much disposed to dispute with me the right of road, but a yell and a crack of my whip put him to flight. I believe you seldom find cattle savage in Africa: something in the air, or breeding, or early handling, appears to counteract that disposition. Talking a few years ago to a Scotch gentleman on the subject of Ayrshire cattle, he informed me that it was almost impossible to keep the bulls of this breed after

they were four years old. I know when I was a boy I had a wholesome dread of trespassing too far into a field where there was a bull.

After having ridden about five miles I came to three wagons outspanned by the roadside, in a very picturesque position. In the foreground, with his back against one of the wheels, sat on the ground a very handsome, clean-looking old man. In English he returned my salutation. The clatter of my horse's feet brought several younger persons out of their wagons, who all shook hands with me, offered me coffee, and expressed pleasure at making my acquaintance.

Soon my difficulties were narrated, and when I started on my return I had their assurance that they would hurry and get yoked, as that was the direction they were travelling, "and put me all to rights before they left me." True to their word, they speedily put in an appearance, and further, with their own cattle, trecked me to the top of the next acclivity, leaving therefore no difficulties in the way till I reached the town on Bushman's River. For this service they would accept nothing. On pressing the one who appeared the most active in directing how to accomplish the task, he quickly answered, "No, no; you would have done the same for us." They were Englishmen from Norfolk, who farmed land fifty miles to the eastward. They had been about ten years in the country, and had done well.

The road down to Bushman's River is cut out of the face of steep, rocky hills, covered with rather large timber for this part of Africa. The stream, which is about the size of the Clyde at Hamilton, flows rapidly over a very rough bottom. The descent to the bridge that crosses it is very steep, and must not be attempted

without locking the wheels. We passed through the outskirts of the village, a long road with a few houses on one side, and the barrack of the Natal Mounted Police Force on the other, till we arrived at what looked like a village-green, where we outspanned in front of a place of business kept by a Scotch gentleman, whom we found the essence of hospitality. Soon after un-yoking, the chief officer of the Mounted Police called upon us, and insisted on our becoming his guests; but we had to decline, being already engaged.

That evening a serious accident happened: the chestnut horse cast himself and put his hip out of joint. Every effort was made to replace it, but in vain. The smaller pony, that Holly had thrown down, day by day became more useless; so we determined to leave both behind: thus out of our stud but one remained. To add to other troubles Morris is worse; and although I wish to persuade him to remain here for a few days, and let me treck on towards the Drackenberg, he will not listen to it.

We spent a very pleasant evening at Mr. Ross's house; he invited the chief of police to join us: we sat late, and our host confided to us that, having made sufficient for all his wants, he intended soon to retire from business, and pass the remainder of his days at home. May he enjoy that rest and peace which the hospitable and honourable are ever entitled to! is my wish.

Morris still unwell. On our next day's march we bathed; I fear it was imprudent on his part, for at our outspanning-place I found him very flushed and feverish, and his throat severely ulcerated. He must either go back to our last halting-place to recruit, or I will order

the wagon to return. Holly also complains that the work is too hard for him: bless my soul! he has done nothing but lie in the wagon, except when eating. Morris proposes taking him with him, and our friend of the "Red, White, and Blue" is anxious for the arrangement. I fear he thinks me a hard and unfeeling taskmaster. This I cannot help, for his own misconduct has brought on all his troubles, and therefore I have no will to do his part of the labour.

It was discovered that at a house in the vicinity—a solitary place, half hotel and half shop, with no human dwellings within many miles—a conveyance and horses, carrying the mails from Colenso, stops three or four times a week. This is fortunate, for the invalid will go there and wait for its arrival, where, between the rest, quiet, good food, and the care of the landlord and his wife, I have no doubt he will soon feel himself again.

After this arrangement was come to, we sat down to our midday meal; it was one of the very saddest I ever ate in my life; not a word was spoken. At length Morris—my tried, good, kindhearted friend—and myself walked down to the river. He spoke bitterly of his disappointment and his grief at leaving me alone; he saw that any delay on my part, even that of a day, was to ruin for ever any chance I possessed of getting up-country, for the Boers would not wait an hour when ready to treck. So he did not advise me to return. However, he pointed out the hardships before me; the loneliness that I should suffer from want of companionship, and the danger I should be exposed to if I met with an accident or became ill. This had been considered long before as what I had to dread, and I placed my life on the stake.

"Well, good-bye, old man. God knows if ever we shall meet again," he said.

"Good-bye, my dear, dear friend!"

We embraced; tears stood in his eyes, while I was completely upset, and felt nearer breaking down than ever I did before.

Morris with a valise in his hand, Holly with a carpet bag, both walked silently away; presently the latter slackened his pace, stopped, turned round, looked towards me, threw down his carpet bag, and came up to me running. "I can't go," he said, "without bidding you good-bye." I held out my hand, he took it; and when I quietly told him "I should have been very much disappointed if you had," he gave me one long, long look, sadder far than I thought his face could express, dropped my hand, and slowly, without once turning, followed Morris. "Oh! does not a parting like this makes amends?"

Alone! yes, I am alone; to realise the fact was dreadful; the more I contemplated it the more unequal I felt to the task before me. Action was the only remedy, so I explained to the Boers that I was going ahead, told Umganey to catch the pony, and taking my rifle, and followed by a couple of the dogs, forded the river, and slowly rode on to our next resting-place.

For days past, especially during the morning trek, I had seen abundant proofs that bush-buck were far from scarce along our route. But I always had too much to do to think of hunting, and even if it had been otherwise, as certain as I either dropped behind or went ahead, some accident or other would occur to cattle or wagon; thus I had made up my mind never to lose sight of them, and would even now have stuck to my

resolution, if it had not been that I was perfectly aware that I must do something to occupy my mind and drive away care.

After riding over a mile along a very heavy sandy road, I came to an open meadow, well wooded on either side, with a stream in the middle; and believing that the Boers would not inspan for an hour to come, I resolved to ride up one side of it and down the other. Bontebuck and Bob were my companions, both well accustomed to a gun. We had not gone far when several partridges (*Perdrix Nataliensis*) were flushed, for all dogs that I have found in Africa appear to hunt indifferently fur or feather.

These birds are very much like the ruffed grouse of North America, but are destitute of the wattles down the neck; they lay well, are swift upon the wing, so, where abundant, afford good sport. Their favourite habitat is wooded kloofs, in which water is plentiful. Their call is very peculiar, being more like the cackle of the guinea-fowl than that of the partridge family. Several quail were also flushed. As far as I can judge, for I have not shot any yet, the latter are identical with the quail of Southern Europe. Having a Martini-Henry carbine with me, these small deer could chaff me with impunity.

But while thinking about the birds, I perceive Bob going like a racehorse up the ravine, while Bontebuck bounded up higher and higher with the hope of getting a more extended range of vision, then suddenly down went his head, and off he goes: game, reptile, or vermin of some sort is certainly afoot; but what can it be? Looking out for holes—and the rider must do that in South Africa—I gave the pony the spur, and galloped

forward to some high ground, an offshoot of the ridge on which I was. I saw neither of the dogs from this elevated position, and, provoking on such occasion, neither of them at any time gives tongue. Well, I might as well be here as anywhere else : a pretty view is stretched before me, a fine wide placid stream, an immense meadow, and in the far distance a few white cottages, and our wagons cannot go down the acclivity in front of me without my seeing them.

Thus feeling secure in every sense, I jumped off my horse, knee-haltered him, gave him a slap on the rump, and told him to make the best use of his time. Taking out my pipe, I quietly and studiously filled it. There are, gentle reader, different ways of filling a pipe, and each manner denotes whether the filler is in a hurry or the reverse, meditative or angry. I have filled a pipe when I have heard dogs running and expected a shot—promptness was the object then to be obtained ; therefore you do not think of the ash that is in it, that will probably impede the draught, but press the bowl into your pouch, shove your finger after the load to keep the tobacco in its place, and so the operation is performed. If not in a hurry, you fill it with precision : clean out the bowl first, place every layer of tobacco in position, and are careful to leave no surplus of the nicotian weed. Meditatively filling a pipe is a slow process ; and after having completed it you find, through your mind being intent on other matters, that so much tobacco overtops the bowl, that when you attempt to light it, the first puff of wind carries all the burning top away, and another fusee or match is wanted. But the angry process is—dig out your pipe, and probably put the point of your knife through the bottom of the

bowl, then force the tobacco in so hard that all draught is impeded ; puff, puff go your cheeks without response ; then you become more angry, till it strikes you of a sudden what a fool you are to give way to such temper : you recover yourself, and enjoy your smoke.

Meditatively, then, on this occasion I filled my pipe, for I thought of those who had just left me and of the future before me. I lit it, but the overhanging portion blew off ; I was, therefore, going to light another match when I heard a noise as of a sharp slap upon the rocks. Putting my pipe down, and gently turning to face the sound, I saw a matured bush-buck to windward of me, and, judging from his manner, intently studying the pony, now about a couple of hundred yards off. My presence the game was evidently perfectly ignorant of, still he appeared angry ; the little mane along his withers was erect, and he looked not unlike the village goat who knows that the hour has arrived for the schoolboys to burst forth into liberty from their late restraint. Quietly picking up my rifle, at point-blank range I fired at his russet flank ; I heard the ball strike, still I saw the buck go down the hillside with all his legs in their right places. Well, it was a shot that none but a duffer could miss ; the object of aim was not seventy yards off, and stood considerably taller than a Leicester sheep. As I was shoving in a fresh cartridge, very indifferent whether the poor beast was hit or not, up came Bonty, immediately behind him Bob, to the very place where the bush-buck had stood, and in a moment both turned off, and, going their best, followed the course he had taken. For ten minutes I remained looking down into the hollow beneath, hoping to see the game at bay ; but in this I was disappointed,

so thought I would again light the recusant pipe. While doing so I heard growls and one or two suppressed yelps, so I sought the pony, and hurried to the place from whence the sounds emanated. At length I reached it, and there were the dogs, Bontebuck much out of breath, with his tongue hanging flaccidly over his lower jaw, and Bob standing like a pointer, his hair bristled up, as if anxious to lay hold of something he dare not attack. Still I could see no game ; but that some had been brought to bay no one who knew dogs' manners and natures could doubt.

Coming within fifty yards of the hounds, I jumped off the pony and walked to the spot ; but before I knew what I was about something sprung out of the bush, and was within two or three yards of me when my rifle, employed as a pistol, turned it over. Fortunately I used my weapon as I did, for I never could have had time to bring it to my shoulder before the assailant's horns had impaled me.

It was the bush-buck : the first shot had been too low and too far back either to cripple or kill. This was not my first experience of bush-buck, but I had since been occupied with other game, and had forgotten what an active, plucky little beast it was when wounded. Let novices beware of wounded bush-buck. After divesting the carcase of the paunch and stomach, I was about to leave it on the road for the Boers to pick up, when a horseman joined me ; he told me the wagons were close, so we waited to hand over to them the reward of my prowess, after which, along with my acquaintance, whom I had met at Bushman's River, I rode forward to Colenso.

CHAPTER XI.

CROSSING THE DRACKENBERG.

Colenso—Curious Custom of Naming Towns—An Excellent *Cuisine*—A Smart v. a Handsome Man—The Men who get on—"The Rising Sun"—Fish for Dinner—Are not Sardines Fish?—Night Marches—Umganey is "Bass's Boy"—The Lad's Willingness—Morris Rejoins me—White Savages—The Great Phairshon—William's Masterly Activity—Chocolate-making—Ready for the Ascent of the Drackenberg—The Shooting of *Olephunts*—"Do you Englishmans want the Transvaal?"—Native *Animus* against British Rule—Van Renan's Pass—Doré's Illustrations of the *Inferno*—The Passage Begun—Klippling—Crawling On—Narrow Escapes—Very Cold—The Summit is Passed—Hurrah!

COLENZO is an extremely pretty little place; its white houses and wide street give it quite an aristocratic appearance. What's in a name? Much, I should say; and the person after whom it is named I should not a bit be surprised to find living there, and that to his energy, attention, and industry are due its attractive appearance. It is not necessary in this country to reside in a town to cause it to be named after you. Did Sir Harry Smith ever live at the town of Harri-smith, or Lady Smith at the town of Ladysmith?

My new acquaintance, a very pleasant, well-informed man, was going to sleep at the hotel, so I resolved to do the same. Without Morris, and in the vicinity of hotel accommodation, the interior of the wagon would be intensely lonely and objectionable.

I was much pleased afterwards that I formed this resolution, for I found the establishment highly respect-

able and clean, the host a gentleman, lately an officer of our Bengal army, and the *cuisine* excellent and well served—a curry that would have done honour to the table of the governor-general, with rice, each grain of which was a separate and independent pearl, was put upon the table; nor were chutney and chow-chow pickle wanting as the necessary condiments. A flake of Bombay duck would have been an admirable addition, but those pisciferous creatures have not yet learned to swim across to Africa's shores. The table was full, and some pleasant frontier men among the number. A young transport rider, about six feet two, who had travelled much, and done so with his eyes open, was a specimen of humanity that any nationality might be proud of, and any family, however aristocratic, regard as a noble representative of their race. He knew much on which he conversed, and more on which he held his tongue. We sat late, drank but little, and smoked a great deal. He reminded me of a late officer of the Blues, who was known by the name of Punch, handsome enough in appearance to be used as the model on which we should like future generations to be built. But the country values a handsome man at less than a smart man; consequently the former, for he is a fearfully touchy creature, considers himself slighted, wanders forth into the world, trusting to his pluck and giant strength; the latter, on the contrary, knows bread and butter are to be got at home, and preferring the ills he knows to those he knows not of, minds not his corns being trodden on if he thinks he can use the apology of the aggressor as the means of an introduction from which may spring chances of future aggrandisement. No, no; put your pride in your pocket if you want to get on: with the kicks come

the halfpence. In this world men do not help those whom they feel their equals in courage, strength of mind, judgment. That would never do ; but the fawning sycophant, who makes his patron believe that he is unworthy to lick the dust off his shoes, to him will be extended the hand of assistance, because, forsooth, he is so humble and meek. Here is the difference : the one will oppose you openly as a man, hand to hand or tooth to tooth, while the other will bite you in the back with the venom of certain destruction. It always makes me savage when I meet the finest, most open-hearted specimens of our race driven to colonies or foreign lands, to eke out a scanty subsistence, and ultimately pass off the face of the earth, while the cunning hypocrite fattens and waxes rich at home.

My friend of last night wished me to join him, for he travels the same route for three hundred miles ; but he is pressed for time, and consequently makes forced marches. I am not ; and, even if I wished, dare not hurry my cattle.

At sunrise I crossed the ferry, and at first traversed a very pretty country, afterwards a most dismal one. Who knows the stretch of old Scotland that extends from Seutra Hill, beyond Blackshiels, as you go to the town where is reported to have lived bonnie Maggie Lauder ? After you have got a mile or two over the ridge, halt, and look to all the *airts* of the wind—moor in front, moor behind, and moor to right and left. Such is the land through which we are now passing. At length I arrive opposite a tavern, with “hot meals” announced in the window.

Can it be possible in such a place as this ? I cast my eyes up, and see over the door a gorgeous painting

of sunset, all red herrings and Findon haddocks, and over it, in large characters, the name of the house, "The Rising Sun." Calling to mind the old proverb enforcing us not to judge by appearance, I enter. In a suave, bland voice I ask, "What can I have?" "Some nice fish, sir," says the host. "How long before they are ready—twenty minutes or half an hour? for I wish to look after my cattle first." "Say thirty minutes," replied the host. "Very well," meekly I answered, and made my exit forthwith, and attended to the wants of my four-footed beasts, anticipating the meal. Fish—only think! fish—which I had not eaten for ever so long.

At the appointed moment I found myself entering the house with fish on the brain. On being shown into the dining-room, I discovered a dirty towel spread on the table, a loaf of very doubtful bread, a plate, and a small box of sardines. "Ah! an appetiser. This fellow understands the secret of living!" mentally exclaimed I. So I sat down and ate the sardines, and vociferously knocked on the table for the waiter to bring the *pièce de resistance*.

The host entered.

"Those sardines were very good. It was very thoughtful of you to provide them. I will now, if you please, have the fish—the *poisons*;" for I thought to make a facetious joke.

The landlord stared; so did I. At length he gasped, "You have eaten the fish."

"You don't call those fish?" I cried out furiously.

"Well, what do you call them?" he answered.

I seized the empty sardine-box. He retired rapidly, and closed the door between us.

Vowing vengeance on the perpetrator of such a joke

—for I do not like jokes when I am the victim—I pondered over my disappointment, and lit my pipe to help me to think. At first I considered myself a very ill-used man; then that I had been grossly deceived; and before I left the table I asked myself the question, Are sardines not fish?

After this it was treck, treck, treck. There was a fine moon at night, so the oxen were three times yoked in the twenty-four hours. I dare not complain; for it was come on or stop where you are. This extraordinary hurry induced me to ask William the cause. “Pater and Hendrick want to see their *frows* and *kinderkins*.” Men acting under such influences I knew it was impossible to argue with, so I gave up the thought of reasoning on the matter. I got so resigned to my fate, that when I heard the Kaffirs woke up by the shout of “Treck!” I jumped out from underneath my warm blankets, regardless of night air, cold, stones, or bushes. I looked after the horse, Jim and Umganey helped William with the cattle, and Imp, with his confounded *feusack* and a jambock, hustled the dogs out from under the wagon, and packed away any of the cooking utensils that might lie about.

These night marches were very cold, so, to keep myself warm, I led the pony and walked on in front; for now that we were ascending to very high lands, the lad Jim was constantly required at the brake. At length the boy Umganey, who occasionally escaped foreloping when the track was well defined, would come and relieve me of the halter. Hourly he became more useful to me, and hourly I became more attached to him; so one day I gave him an old tweed coat, trousers, cap, and a blanket. He was changed from that moment: he did

his work as before, but he was now his "*Bass's* boy." What I took pleasure in he did: of his own accord he looked after the pony and dogs; and when once or twice I went with him herding, he was the happiest lad alive. The cattle he could do anything with but drive, for he had never learned to do so; but I doubt when he took them out on the velt to feed whether they would have left him. One day I went to him while herding: I had my rifle on my arm. I explained that I wanted to shoot something. He took me up a hill, very steep and very stony, and signed to me to sit down. I did so, and quietly smoked a pipe, while he disappeared. Soon he came back, led me along a most intricate path, making me stoop and bend as I advanced. Of course, I expected it was one of the numerous hill antelopes he was bringing me to; but when I had looked over the shelter we had reached, what did I discover but a troop of baboons about seventy yards off, headed by a most powerful patriarchal old fellow! The boy was evidently disappointed that I did not fire at them.

This kind of monotonous work had gone on for nearly a week, when one afternoon, two or three hours from sunset, Umganey rushed to the wagon where I had been lying down, and exclaimed, "*Bass! Bass!*" pointing back to the road we had travelled in the morning. He said something more which I did not comprehend, but like a wild thing darted off in that direction. I could not make him out, and commenced to think that he was bereft of reason. In ten minutes more I saw him approaching by the side of a cart, his face illuminated with the broadest smile, and all his splendid white teeth exposed. The conveyance stopped, and out of it jumped—who do you suppose?

No other than dear Morris, looking so well. In all my life I had not experienced a happier reunion.

"The Laird" had followed me for several days, and almost despaired of overtaking me; his driver had mutinied, and refused to proceed any farther, so that he was compelled to take whip and reins in his own hands.

The cattle by this time were yoked, the driver and his trap dismissed: so leaving the pony to Jim, together, as of yore, we walked on ahead, I listening to all he had endured, afterwards narrating my own sufferings to him; neither was the subject exhausted, for when the out-spanning-place was reached, over our supper we fought again our battles, and once more repeated the process in the interior of the wagon, while discussing our glass of grog and pipe before closing our eyes for the night. Too much pleasure for one day I had received, so could not sleep. Thus when we trecked in the morning I did not disturb him, so that we were at our next halting-place preparing for breakfast before he turned out.

Again we apparently had entered the country of incessant rain. Seldom for an hour did it cease; the ground was perfectly soddened, and all the watercourses brimful; but when unfordable a delay of a few hours would often produce such a subsidence, that the felloes of the wheel would scarcely become submerged. If the country was wild, what about the people? for we passed two or three cottages in fifty miles. Well, they were as near savages as it is possible for whites to become. One barn-like house, two or three hundred yards from the road, I visited. My approach cannot have been seen, for when I knocked at the door, and the inmates, a mother and three or four scared-looking children, perceived me, they rose from the table with a scream, and

rushed out into the open like a flock of frightened sheep. They must have thought me the Great Phairshon whom Professor Aytoun tells of, who went forth to plunder and to ravish. But I was determined not to be done in that way, for I wanted milk, so made several efforts to parley with them, but all was of no avail: the nearer I approached the hillside, the faster they retreated up it, so I had to return without the luxury I coveted. What nationality they belonged to, what language they spoke, I know not! Their scream was English, if an English school-girl screams in English, for there was a strong similarity between the two, and they were fair-complexioned.

Next day after this adventure it rained in torrents. It was useless to try and keep a fire lighted, so we sat all day, for it was impossible to treck, inside the wagon, which was worse than clammy—actually wet—diversifying the time between munching biscuits, smoking, and grumbling at the hard treatment the world gave us.

It must have been about eight in the evening, possibly later, for it was getting dark, when Morris said, "What would I not give for something hot?" Strange coincidence! I was thinking at the moment of the same thing. So remembering where there was a half-empty deal box that was once filled with candles, with a grin of destruction on my face, I procured it, rent it asunder, deliberately split it up into tiny pieces, and, regardless of wind and rain, went to the sheltered side of the wagon, and boiled a kettle of water; and while the chocolate was being dissolved in our *beakers* (tins with the handle at the side that hold a pint), Morris called from within, "Look out, old man; remember we have one hundred pounds of loose powder on board!" Scarcely

had the last syllable been said, than William, who had been seriously contemplating my labours, vanished into the outer darkness, with an amount of activity I never saw him previously display.

After having boiled another kettle of water, the remains of the fire were scattered; then William came forth with the whining complaint, "Oh, Bass, I am so hungry!"

"Have some more biscuit, then: there are plenty in the box."

"But, Bass, they are so cold."

"He wants some chocolate—give him some to get rid of him," said Morris. So he received the chocolate and departed. But William had the nose of a pointer and the intelligence of the fox when eating and drinking were going on; thus, as soon as I commenced mixing my grog, back he came, raised the curtain of the wagon, and solemnly contemplated the operation, repeating at short intervals, and in a most snivelling tone, "I was very cold," "I was very," &c. &c. He should here have been told to shut up, or go and put his head in a bag, but we dare not treat him according to his deserts, for we were in his power till over the Drackenberg. So he was courteously asked if he would like a drink. Would a fish swim? He was handed in his beaker about half a pint of the twenty over-proof. Oh, that was prime stuff, and so economical! it hit hard, and bit like an adder. But the poor Kaffirs who were under the wagon, without complaining or murmuring, wanted something to warm them more than any one. So a ration of grog was served all round, to their immense delight.

In the morning it cleared up; and after a tiresome day's work we reached the White House, a small

tavern, just under the Berg, where quite fifty wagons were assembled, waiting for an improvement in the weather. As a matter of course, among so many wagons all engaged in trade of some description or other, the two strange Englishmen going up through the northern country were regarded with great curiosity. For the few hours that we were outspanned here, I believe every teamster had a good stare at us; and I think our height and apparent strength were the means of entitling us to more than the ordinary respect they show strangers. However, an incident, trifling it is true, occurred, yet as it expressed the sentiments of some of the population I will give it. A stalwart Boer from the Transvaal, and dressed in the Dopper costume, happening to hear me called "Captain" by driver William, turned round sharp on that luckless individual, and said a word or two hurriedly in Dutch, which I did not catch; in response William murmured something about soldier officer, when the stranger, with a grunt ominous of disapprobation, hurriedly departed, looking anything but an amiable man. Likes or no likes, what did I care? although I would always prefer conciliation to a quarrel. It is the best policy in the end, and the young traveller will not do wrong to remember this.

We were about putting the cattle in when the tall stranger, with a companion, again made his appearance. At the time I was standing some way from the wagon. He approached me, and introduced his friend, who spoke English fairly.

"So you are going up to shoot *olephunts*." (Both Boers and Africanders use this word.)

"I am, and hope we shall not have to go far beyond the Transvaal to find them."

“But does the Queen send her soldier officers to shoot olephunts?”

“No; not that I’m aware of. I’m not in the army now.”

Here there was a long consultation between the two, and I quietly stole off to where the mob of cattle were having their reims put on. After a few minutes they again joined us, and the former spokesman resumed the conversation.

“My friend thinks, and so do I, that so many of you Englishmans come to see the Transvaal, that you want to get the country.”

“Very likely,” responded I, which being interpreted resulted in both getting extremely angry. “Well, you will see,” continued the speaker, “that we can fight, that we are good men, and that we can defend our country. Why you send your soldiers to trouble us? you have plenty country of your own. We’ll fight, and show you how many we can kill of the red-coats.”

This conversation is simply mentioned to show the *animus* of a certain portion of the inhabitants of the late Republic to British rule. There is no doubt that Carl Kreuger and John Fayune are intensely Republican, and would resist to death the annexation of the Transvaal, but fortunately their faction composes a small portion of the population, and their residence is chiefly on the northern frontier.

The road by which we cross the Drackenberg to the country beyond is called Van Renan’s Pass, a person of that name being supposed to have been the first who came from the east through this gap to the country beyond. He must have been a bold man, and a sure-footed mountaineer, for as far as one can judge, looking

from beneath, it is truly a fearful place now, and what must it have been before roads had been blasted out? Some of the peaks, I am told, reach an altitude of 11,000 feet; the summit of the pass we are about to go through is reported to be 6,500 feet above sea-level—500 feet higher than the most elevated portion of the Atlantic and Pacific line of railroad connecting New York with San Francisco.

The sun is setting, and of course all the valley is in shadow; but to look at these mountains, precipitous, grim, rocky, and almost destitute of vegetation, it brings at once to my mind some of the illustrations of Dante's "*Inferno*," drawn by Gustave Doré. We see visions in our sleep, faces we know not, and scenes we have never been in. Could that great artist have been transported here in mind before he drew those pictures? I never open this illustrated edition of that great work but I feel a cold unearthly chill creep over me, such a feeling as I experienced in childhood, when, by the fitful light of the fire, I have listened to some fearful ghost story. And now at maturity, as I gaze at the scene before me, the same feeling, only softened by experience and age, lays hold of me. If this wild precipitous black range of mountains, with its irregular jagged outline, were the barrier between earth and hell, how mortals would dread the time of passing them, for once beyond, hope for ever must be closed!

Our wagon is to go up first, being supposed to be the heaviest. Hendrick's and Pater's teams are to be put to it—thirty-six oxen in all—and if we get to the summit in ten hours we are to deem ourselves fortunate.

All is in readiness; the cattle are yoked, and the treck-tow is stretched out to its greatest length. The drivers have taken their places—William in front, Pater in the middle, and Hendrick (as the most skilled Jehu) behind, while Morris and I are instructed to follow close after with a large stone in our hands, which is to be jammed under the hind wheels whenever the wagon stops, or we hear the word "*Klip*" shouted.

The sun had long gone down, but we had a grand moon—one that seemed much overgrown, still had lost none of its brilliancy by the process.

Hendrick passes the signal to the other drivers to know if they are ready; having received a favourable reply, with good bass voice he shouts "*Amba treck*," the words being echoed by each of the others, and off moves the wagon in gallant style. For about a hundred yards our course is over the sward, after that comes an abrupt turn entering a steep incline, and the ascent has begun. For a hundred yards or more it was a tremendous pull, but as it was the start, the oxen were comparatively fresh, and no stones were required; but in fifty yards more "*Klip!*" was called out, and my friend and I did the klipping, Hendrick at the same time rushing behind to the rear of the wagon to put on the brake.

Now, this klipping may be a playful amusement for some people, but Morris and myself very soon came to the conclusion that it bore a very strong resemblance to hard work, with every probability of getting your fingers crushed or yourself run over. Neither was it a joke to carry a rock about twenty-five pounds in weight up a hill—mountain, I should say—far more favourable for the progression of goats or Shetland ponies than human beings. Though seeing the matter in this light,

yet we dare not remonstrate, for if we did not klip, the wagon as likely as not would go over the ledge, and halt—in fragments.

Grade after grade, the hill increased in steepness, and often the oxen were compelled to stop every twenty or thirty yards. The drivers certainly did their work, and did not spare themselves; and the heavy breathing of the cattle showed that their task was no easy one.

Although our stoppages were most numerous, still we crawled on—truly step by step—still forward; so if we met nothing more formidable, in time we would reach the top. We were in luck, too, as far as the weather was concerned, for a more lovely night could not have been made to order; only one improvement could I have suggested—namely, that the temperature had been a little higher. Still, perhaps this slight fault gave one more enjoyment in the use of his tobacco, and more gusto in the flavour of his grog. Both of these commodities I enjoyed immensely in ascending Van Renan's Pass; my friend, who is always very abstemious, I think on this occasion did likewise: and conveniently there ran along the mountain side of the track the prettiest little purling brook of sweet water that ever grouse-shooter or gillie selected, as an inducement to make a locality become their noonday resting-place.

But while digressing, we have come to a terrible grip: the gun-like reports of the whips crack! crack! crack! incessantly, like the irregular fire of a company skirmishing; and I had just remarked, "That's hot, Morris!" when that most objectionable—nay, abominated—shout of "Klip!" struck on our ears. I did my best to be quick, and in consequence got a

finger pinched. Of course it must be so—persons who do things in a hurry are certain to get hurt, if, indeed, they don't actually make a complete bungle of the matter.

That last pull was a near thing, but the driving and energy of Hendrick saved us, or at least the wagon, from trying to discover the sea-level; for when I got my fingers pinched I became “gingery”—an expression I remember using as a boy—and failed for some time in getting my stone under the wheel.

That doubtless was the worst trial we had, for although it was only in the middle of the incline, halts afterwards became less frequent and less prolonged. There was one rest I well remember; it was a point two-thirds to the summit, and where the road diverged from about north to north-west. At the moment the moon was unusually brilliant, and you could see the tops of hill after hill, till you almost imagined that the limit of your vision was where the ocean joined the sky—imagined, remember I say.

At this time it was fearfully cold—the thermometer I do not think had reached freezing-point—and there was no wind; still our progress was so slow that the blood chilled in our veins: and pray, reader, recollect we had left Natal covered with tropical vegetation in full leaf, not more than a few weeks before, and crossed the equator in the Atlantic Ocean not over another month previously.

I can recall our both leaning against a rock shivering: no complaint was made beyond the remark that it was “deuced cold!” Still, I have no doubt we both felt it even to our marrow-bones.

Again we are off: the whips crack, the drivers scold,

and shout the names of lagging oxen, while the poor beasts groan, and cough, and wheeze with their exertions and the effects of the rarefied atmosphere. From the abyss on our left rises an immense riven rock. Here we are informed that a wagon at no long-distant time back had gone over; but we pass the dangerous place in safety, and—hurrah! hurrah! we are descending, having passed the summit.

A breathing-time is given. Each one looks as if he had accomplished a great feat, and that he is the hero of it. The bottle is produced; each driver has a heavy drink; half the treck-tow, with its cattle, is unhitched, and the wagon expeditiously descends into the valley beneath, and we outspan at the south-eastern limit of a large grassy plain.

Neither Morris nor I are troubled with cattle this span, for the driver has to go back to help the others; so we light a fire, cook our coffee, and turn in to sleep the sleep of those who know they have earned it.

CHAPTER XII.

EN ROUTE FOR THE TRANSVAAL.

Rest after the Passage—"We twa hae paidl't in the Burn"—Independent of the Boers, if need be—Red-water—No Cure—How the Mystery might be solved—An Extraordinary Finch—What a Tail!—An Expensive Toll—Bob and the Pig—Harrismith—The Barrack-masters of Old—The "Roughs" of South Africa—A Law-abiding Population—Are the Boers Temperate?—A Dutch Beauty—Baboons on Our Way—The Sentinel Mount—Memories of the Past—Three Splendid Mountains—Capped by Castle, Crown, and Mitre—Our Cook—His one Great Failing—Advice to Bachelors—How to enjoy a Meal on the Sly—The Kaffir Crane—Fevers—Our Driver's Task—The Boer's Love of Wife and Children—Habits of the Boer.

It was quite four o'clock the next day before all our drivers' wagons were up; and, poor fellows! they looked weary, and were so, and well they might be; for they had had twenty-two hours of incessant toil; and as the cattle as well as themselves must rest and eat, our departure was delayed till the next day.

Hereabouts there are plenty of bush-buck, and rock-antelope—an abundance of them, an old wagoner said—but none of us felt disposed to clamber the neighbouring cliffs, or search through the adjoining ravines, for game. Without dissent it was cordially voted a day of rest, and so we held it.

One thing, however, my companion and self did—we stole away from the others to a pure pellucid mountain brook hard by, and, like a pair of schoolboys by Cart (a river in Scotland) side, paddled in its crystal stream till all the stains of our late labours were washed away.

But, speaking for myself, the most enjoyable feeling I had that day was to turn and look at the range of mountains—the rugged, the steep, the precipitous, the dangerous Drackenberg, now in our rear—so long the bugbear of our journey, so long the point foretold that was to end our expedition; and, on the other hand, to look over the vast plain that lay extending to the north, and to know that it was but a matter of a few days when we should be trecking through countless herds of spring-buck, bless-buck, intermixed with quaggas and wildebeest (*gnu*).

Again, another source of rejoicing I possessed was that, if the Boers who accompanied us became insolent or lazy, we were now comparatively independent. At the same time, in justice I must add that they had stood to us nobly, and gone through a severe and heavy ordeal which few but men skilled as the Boers are in bullock-driving could have accomplished; for we had a load that would have frightened any person but such as were as ignorant as ourselves in like matters.

Next morning at daybreak we inspanned, and made a short treck of two hours. Our halting-place was densely clothed with good grass, and in the immediate vicinity an abundant supply of water could be obtained. Here the cattle were allowed to revel till three in the evening; for Hendrick and Pater had to go to a neighbouring farm to fetch, if alive, two oxen they were obliged to leave behind on their downward journey, on account of their being attacked with red-water.

I have, in a former chapter, alluded to lung-sickness: red-water is a disease almost as prevalent in this part of the country; it unquestionably is hæmorrhage in the vicinity of the bladder, which ultimately wears out

and exhausts the victim. Each farmer I have spoken to on the subject professed to have a cure for it, but, on comparing notes, every remedy was different. That none of the Boers know any preventive of the ravages of this disease is certain; for, if so, why do they not employ it? and the proof they do not is that along the roads the traveller finds, or sees, hundreds of skeletons that mark the place where victims to red-water fell. In one part of the country, not far from Harrismith, the road was as covered with the bones of dead cattle as was the road from Balac-lava to the front, during the spring of 1855. The reader may justly ask how I know the poor animals died of red-water. My answer is simply, the drivers who were with us said so. An experienced veterinary surgeon, with a well-earned reputation, and a handsome salary attached to his appointment, in a year or two, if I mistake not, would soon solve the mystery, and save Natal tens of thousands of pounds annually.

At this camping-ground I first saw that beautiful and extraordinary finch, with a tail so long that, in a breeze of wind, it seems that the bird is carried by the tail, instead of the reverse. Their plumage on the body is a beautiful full-coloured orange and a glossy black. The tail I found, in some specimens, to be upwards of two feet long, and an inch and a half wide, and so pliant are the feathers even down to the quill, that they flutter and rustle in the wind like pieces of black silk.

When it is blowing pretty strong their tails seem to carry them away down wind, but I think in this action the bird is either amusing himself or trying to deceive the observer; for on several occasions, when I have thought them struggling against the breeze unsucces-

fully, I have tried to approach them by getting below to the point whither they were apparently drifting; but, when my motive was perceived, they would alter their course, and pursue a new one with a tolerably strong flight.

It is most amusing to see two of the male birds fight: from the tops of neighbouring reeds they dash at each other, and ascend twenty or thirty yards, struggling with beak and claws, the two tails getting so mixed, that you might expect, after the manœuvre is over, the one to ask the other which tail is which. The hen, on the other hand, is a demure little brown thing, scarcely as large as our hen sparrow, and quite as humble in plumage. Their nest is built in reeds, and, although larger, has much resemblance to a sedge warbler's. Erroneously it is called in this part of the country by those who speak English *widahfinch*.

At the appointed hour that evening we trecked, Hendrick having brought back his two oxen, but so low in flesh are they, that I very much doubt the possibility of their carrying their carcasses to Potschefstrom. An hour and a half after starting we passed through a toll-gate—the division between the British colony of Natal and the Free State. Here was levied such a sum for permission to pass, as to induce the victim to wish he had the privilege of keeping a similar establishment, and pocketing all the proceeds. Our next outspanning-place is Harrismith; in an hour and a half we should be there, but that we are delayed in getting the rough greyhound, Bob, to leave go his hold of a very large hog he had pinned by the ear. The whole performance was absurdly ridiculous. Bob saw the pig, and coolly, without the slightest exertion or attempt at speed,

walked up to him; the pig, no way daunted, turned round and faced what he supposed a dangerous neighbour, setting his bristles, and looking as fierce as possible. Still Bob was in no way disconcerted, but made a small feint, and in a moment had his adversary fast by the butt of the ear, and there held him, poor piggy screaming most vociferously till the redoubtable Bob was forced to relax his jaws. I believe in all my life I never saw an animal so destitute of fear as this half-bred greyhound.

At length, just before sunset, we reach Harrismith, and outspan three hundred yards beneath the town, which is situated on a grassy slope at the back of the Drackenberg, which here terminates in perpendicular rocks—almost resembling a wall—seven or eight hundred feet high.

Catalin Bay, that charming Gibraltar detachment for British subalterns of studious minds to ruminate at, is not unlike this place in the lay of the land, only you must transpose the sand into grass, the sea into velt, and leave the rocks alone. About Harrismith you find an abundance of fruit; in the other there was a mulberry-tree in the garden of the officer commanding the detachment; it was a government tree, and I daresay the barrack-master put it in his schedule, for it was uncommonly seedy and unserviceable. When I was a "sub," the whole of the youngsters of my own standing used to suppose that the barrack-master was in the habit of putting all damages in his pocket; I do not think my father could have done so, for he did not die rich. However, he might not have played his cards properly, for twenty years ago it was an accepted fact, at least I never heard any one dispute it, that a barrack-master could realise a large fortune

out of a broken hearth-stone, so often had it been charged in rotation to officers who had the bad luck to reside in the room that possessed it.

Not having to wait for the quarantine officer, as is the habit on shipboard, we at once proceeded to inspect the town and deliver a letter of introduction. At the post-office we called, but a surly little Dutchman refused to deliver letters, as it was after hours. Grumbling at the want of courtesy in officials, we went in search of the gentleman to whom we had credentials. Alas! he had gone to Cronstad, and would not be back for some days. After several inquiries, and making many mistakes, we found the hotel, a large, roomy, square, white house, very dirty and mouldy. There was no inducement to sleep or even eat there. The beverage we wanted (lemonade and pontac) was not to be obtained, so I had a *soupe* of Hollands, the favourite drink of the Boers. To see and learn as much as possible of the people and their ways, I searched out the bar-room; it was a filthy place, filled with as dirty, drunken, dissipated a lot of roughs as ever I set eyes on. The frequenters of the grog-shops of some of the gulches of the Rocky Mountains in olden times could not have surpassed this dissolute crew. Yet the white population of this part of South Africa are a very law-abiding people: robberies seldom take place, and bloodshed more rarely, and though I have heard it asserted that travellers do occasionally disappear in mysterious ways, the law does not trouble itself to ascertain whether such occurrences happen through violence or not.

One thing is certain, the transport riders to the diamond and gold fields carry rich loads of merchandise, and the mail-carts precious stones and specie,

yet I did not hear of any Dick Turpin or Claude Duval having distinguished himself. Many travellers say that the Boers are a very temperate people. I should be inclined to think the reverse, for they will always drink at other people's expense, and are not too proud to ask for more. Returning to the wagon after dusk, we agreed that after all there was no place like home, although it was only a wagon, and that in the middle of a South African velt.

Next morning we visited the post-office, butcher's, baker's, and truly the candlestick-maker's, for we wanted a lantern, and had another stroll through the town to see what we could of the wealth, beauty, and fashion. The reward of our curiosity was that I, possibly through being the most prying, got sight of a Dutch beauty. She was about two-and-twenty years old, and at least weighed a stone for every year she had lived; still, she had a pretty baby face, and wore a clean cotton dress, closed round the waist with a draw-string.

Down in the flat beneath us we can see our people gathering up the cattle, so we must bid adieu to Harri-smith and all its attractions. By ten o'clock we are once more *en route*, with no other towns or villages in our way till Potschefstrom, in the Transvaal, is reached.

To the left is rough, hilly ground, covered with grass, without bush. Morris had remarked to me that he had not yet seen any monkeys; but "talk of the devil," driver William, with his face grinning as far as his ears would permit, came up, and with intense delight pointed out thirty or forty baboons feeding on a hillside as quietly, ordinarily, and peaceably as any other people. There was a charming freedom in their actions—an utter absence, let me say, of putting on

airs, and a simplicity of manners truly delightful, that might with advantage be introduced into more civilised communities. They stared at the wagons, we at them; but, like well-bred people, they evinced no overt curiosity or surprise. It is a mark of good breeding, I believe, to stare; at least I heard a young lady once say, "He must have been a gentleman—he stared so!"

But our dogs, ill-conditioned brutes, purchased indiscriminately from Kaffir or Zulu, Totty or Bushman, who have never previously been in good society, wind these aristocratic children of the highlands, and rush forward with the intent of making an attack upon them, but by dint of shouting, whip-cracking, &c., they are called off. In such engagements the attacking party seldom come off scathless, for, like all mountaineers, apes are wonderfully clannish, and stick to each other through right and wrong, thick and thin.

Baboons apparently live a happy life, if I can judge from appearances; whether there be those bugbears of human society among them, jealousy, intrigue, and fraud, it would be difficult to discover. However, one thing I can say is that their children are precocious and apt to deem themselves of age before their time. Nevertheless, this is a failing common to the period in which we live. The parent monkeys keep up the good old custom of whacking their progeny—correction that is administered with a stern sense of justice. Their government is patriarchal, and they are not polygamists.

Leaving the amiable family in the rear, we wind along the eastern base of a magnificently grand mountain, rising nearly three thousand feet above the plain. It ought to be called the Sentinel, for it looks as if it

were detached from the Drackenberg for such a purpose. Its face towards the summit is quite perpendicular, and the rock seems as black as if coated with the corrosion of thousands of years. A striking view of it is to be obtained from the southern extremity; it then looks like a great organ. The thunders only could be fit music for such an instrument.

We outspanned just before sunset. It was a truly magnificent evening, with sufficient breeze to stir the air, and enough heat to induce one to seek rest; around us the grass is brilliantly green, here and there interspersed with that garden favourite, the scarlet-flowering verbenæ. What memories does not this beautiful little plant recall? every year of your life possibly, but none so vividly as those of childhood! I can see now in memory our old gardener planting them out in the flower-beds among the *aspalia* apple-trees. How carefully he handles them! just observe how gently he takes away the surplus mould from their roots. The flowers are about to start in life, and their father the gardener removes with anxious solicitude all that may militate or impede them in their future existence!

But away towards the east there is a scene the like of which I have never viewed before. Higher mountains I have gazed on, but they ever were a jumble of gigantic masses, grand in outline and magnitude, but destitute of order. Of these the artist might possibly say, "Hence their beauty." No doubt he thinks so, but to argue the point would not convince him or change me. The mountains I now speak of are three in number, running nearly north and south; they connect one portion of the Drackenberg with another, but each stands separate and at almost equal distances apart;

their altitude, I am told, is nine thousand feet; which peak is the highest it would be difficult to say, for they are not equally distant from where we are now halted.

The first and nearest has its sides, in fact all three have, at exactly the same angle, but the summit of each is crowned most dissimilarly. The nearest possesses for its apex a castle, and such a castle! not unlike that of Edinburgh, but increased in size a hundred-fold. There are battlements and tower and watch-house, and all so perfect that it is not necessary to draw upon imagination to believe them the works of man in the feudal ages; and the sky is so clear, so rarefied, that the outline of each detail of this immense citadel can be seen without aid of telescope. The summit of the second is a perfect representation of a crown, not such as is now worn on state occasions by our most gracious Majesty, but such as you see in aged drawings as the head-gear of warlike kings nine or ten centuries ago—men who competed with their lords and barons who should be first to hew down the opposing foe.

The third mountain is capped with a mitre; it is not so perfect as the others, being rather broad in proportion to its height, such as might be expected to have come from the hands of an inexperienced workman, or that had suffered through some sacrilegious infidel having sat on it. Still it is a mitre. Thus we find capping three adjoining mountains a castle, crown, and mitre. Strange, wondrous strange, coincidence!

How horrible it is to think that we must eat to live! I am certain I had quite forgotten that fact when that abominable William, totally destitute of an eye for the picturesque or respect for those that had it, disturbs my

reverie with his whining, snivelling tongue, "Oh, Bass, I am so hungry!" I should have liked to shove the open telescope down his throat, and after it got safely planted shut it up, he would then have something that would stay his digestion a little longer than beef steaks or mutton chops.

Imp is commencing to be a good cook if he would not get the meat so covered with ashes, but *n'importe*, it is clean dirt; he has also an objectionable habit of licking his fingers after turning the beef steak or mutton chop, and it strikes me forcibly that he turns them over a very great deal oftener than is necessary. Roasting the potatoes Morris and I generally look after, also decocting the coffee.

If ever I should have a home and servants like other folks, I shall insist that it be understood, when engaging the cook, that I shall have free run and use of my kitchen. A devilled kidney, a small piece of tender loin steak, even an anchovy toast, cooked by one's self at the most *outré* times, particularly when it upsets all other persons' arrangements, is certainly delicious. Try it, reader; but remember to do it on the sly, not even telling the wife of your bosom. The perfection of time for the experiment is about half-past one in the morning, particularly if you have been spending the evening at your club, and your wife is fond of going to bed early. Slip into the house quietly: of course you carry a latch-key?—it is scarcely necessary to ask that question—all men do. Having closed the door by holding back the catch, and then letting it go gently, for silence is the thing—the utmost silence—then take off your boots; if you have slippers at hand so much the better, but that is not all-important.

Now take the banisters firmly in your hand, descend to the kitchen, out with your fusee-box, and light the gas. "Bless me, how many black beetles! ugh!" Never mind that, you soon get accustomed to them. Then light your fire; this is best accomplished by putting innumerable bundles of firewood in the grate, and lighting them well before you place on the coals; in a few minutes you will have a splendid fire fit to roast an ox. Of course, much of this trouble can be avoided if you have a gas-stove. Now comes the fun, hunting in all unknown corners for plates, cruet-stand, knives, forks, and spoons; and how you laugh in your sleeve at all the little eccentricities of domestic economy you discover! The meat is nearly done; put down a plate to warm; one turn more and then the food is cooked. Now dish it; don't burn your fingers with the plate. Careful; that's it, and you think you never ate anything better in your life. Oh, for a glass of beer! you sigh; and suddenly remember there is the servants' cask next the meat-safe in the kitchen hall. Draw what you want, but remember to turn the tap off. Was ever beer so welcome? Never! One, two, three glasses—stop there, enough is as good as a feast. Now steal quietly up to your room, undress like a mouse, and get into bed. Possibly your wife is sound asleep; possibly, if awake, she would rather not remonstrate till the morning; and possibly you are such a short time married that the calf-love still exists, and she would not for the world disturb you; but it may just be possible she may insist on explanations at once. Say nothing, my friend; you have the joke all in your hands, unless crying begins, and how to act then I could not advise. On second thoughts, perhaps a little baby talk, such as

little ducky, tootsey-wootsey, might come in appropriate. And see, when all is found out in the morning, for of course it will be, how clever your wife will think you, how clever all the servants, individually and collectively, will think you, and in fact you will be justified in considering yourself no end of a fellow! N.B.—Don't take a fourth glass of beer, it will make you hiccough, and when people do so a suspicion most unjustly sometimes arises that they have taken more than is good for them.

The above was in effect communicated to me by an old married man, and is therefore not original. I say this for my own protection, as ladies are sometimes testy about advice of this kind being given to their husbands.

We turned out at daybreak—a glorious morning with scarcely a cloud to be seen. This portion of the day on these African uplands is most invigorating, just sufficiently cold to pull you together, induce you to take exercise, and stimulate your appetite. Our trek was a long one, a considerable portion of which followed the margin of a marsh, in which could be seen an abundance of waterfowl, prominent among which was the Kaffir crane, with long streaming black ribbon-like feathers hanging beside his tail. These plumes are much valued by the natives, who wear them in their hair on all State occasions. Immense numbers of these ornamental and useful birds are shot on this account. As they are great destroyers of reptiles of all descriptions, and so are public benefactors, they ought to be protected. A very large dark-coloured goose, called by the Boers William-maccow, was also abundant. One of them was shot; it is a gross-looking bird, and when cooked was

anything but appetising. About our encampment there are building remains, and a quantity of loose stones, also a few fig-trees—all indicative that a human habitation once stood in the neighbourhood, but I suppose proximity to the marsh and probably mosquitoes drove the inhabitants off to more favoured regions.

Fevers in this part of Africa are only engendered by the vicinity of stagnant water, so that, although water is necessary for cattle, and the Boers are essentially stock-farmers, they will not build except where is to be found an abundance of water. Each farmer owns such immense tracts of land that it is rarely a difficult matter to do this.

The next two days passed over. Neither of us went in search of game, still, we both picked up something by the roadside; in fact, we had scarcely time to hunt, as our drivers hurried on as fast as the cattle could travel; for, remember, their *frows* and *kinderkins* were anxiously awaiting their return, and anticipating with pleasure the numerous good things that their soil-stained parents had in store for them.

A point very much to be admired in the Boer character is their love for wife and children: they constantly talk of them, and sound their praises to those they converse with. Hendrick, who was the chief among our party, was a good-looking man of four-and-twenty, about five feet ten inches high, rather sparely built, and capable of great endurance and speed. He was very retiring, and rarely spoke unless addressed first. Pater, on the other hand, was short and stout, always had something to say, unless when playing on the violin, an instrument that produced the most doleful sounds—even more so than the cats on the

tiles in Pimlico. Their food was of the simplest kind—rusk-bread as hard as bricks, bad coffee, and indifferent sugar; no stimulants, and no animal meat. Parsimoniousness was doubtless the cause of their not having the two last articles, for these transport-drivers make a great deal of money—more than any one at home would imagine—and are really at little or no expense. But if they preferred going without to spending their own money, not a qualm of conscience had they about sponging on us.

CHAPTER XIII.

AMONG THE BOERS.

New Year's Day—First Signs of Game—The Spring Buck—Crossing a Spruit—Rather too much Hospitality—An Invitation to a Wedding—William Elevated—His *Répertoire*—The Scene of Rejoicing—William Sober but Sad—A Vain Attempt to Sleep—Morris in like Predicament—Suffering from Gnats—Reflections under the Attack—My Cattle in Pound—Released.

NEW YEAR'S DAY. Fine clear weather, and not too warm. We commenced trecking soon after daybreak; the cattle were in excellent spirits, and we got along right merrily. About seven I shot a hare and a partridge from the road. The former, although severely wounded, gave the dogs quite a run before it was captured; and if it had not been hit none of our pack could have overtaken it.

About eleven, the first spring bucks we had seen came over the brow of a swell in the velt; they were apparently very tame, although they must have seen our wagons, oxen, and selves, and evinced more curiosity than fear.

We intended as soon as we outspanned to have a shot at them, but before that took place we stuck in a deep boggy spruit, out of which it required our full strength and the loss of an hour to extricate the wagon; so the cracking of whips, shouting of men, and struggling of the cattle frightened them off to parts unknown. Thus we had seen the *avant-courier* of the immense

herds of game that are before us ; and I do not think we regretted not having caused some of their numbers to bite the dust. If we had been short of food it would have been different, but we had still an abundance of that necessary.

I have seen the spring-buck before ; and although I had only time to take a casual glance at them on this occasion, they seemed to look more beautiful than ever they did previously. There is no doubt that they are among the handsomest animals in the world, and are to the African continent what the prong-horned antelope is to the American. There is also a considerable resemblance between them in configuration of body, only that of the New World is the larger.

During our midday outspan the halt was taken advantage of to get our rifles unpacked and put in order, for at any moment now we might find ourselves in the middle of game. At three o'clock we inspanned, and came down a rather steep and difficult hill-side. When we reached the bottom we found that the spruit where the road crossed it was impassable, so we had to make a long detour to our right to find a ford. After proceeding nearly a mile we discovered a place which had been used for this purpose previously, so the cattle were wheeled abruptly at it, Umganey, divested of every particle of clothing, foreloping.

No person who has not witnessed what a Cape wagon can go through would believe that anything constructed of wood and iron would stand such usage as they have to be subjected to, without breaking. All the cattle were now in the water up to their stomachs, pulling their utmost, William on the box cracking his long whip and shouting as if life and death

depended on the issue, when in goes the wagon down the precipitous spongy bank with such a rush as nearly to bury the forepart of the box under water; the hind wheels soon after follow, the whole fabric swaying to and fro, threatening an upset; then slowly righting itself, it moves forward at a snail's pace. The far side is almost reached when snap! goes the treck-tow, and the released oxen rush up the bank, leaving the wagon so deeply buried that but for its heavy load it would have almost floated.

To rectify the breaking of the treck-tow is always a tedious job, for when out of the reach of a blacksmith a green reim has to be procured and woven in and out through three or four of the links on either side of the fracture. Seeing that half an hour at least must elapse before we could extricate ourselves, Morris took his gun and went down the spruit in search of wildfowl, while I remained to assist William and to learn all the devices necessary for getting wagons out of difficulties under any circumstances that may arise.

I did not expect ever to become a good driver; still without being so, when alone on the velt and no European to assist, I might be able to detect at a glance what would be the proper means to adopt under emergencies, and, if necessary, show how to do it. On a cargo of knowledge you do not require to pay any freight.

Our predicament was worse than we anticipated; the delay had allowed the wagon to settle in the soft spongy bottom, so that all the efforts of our cattle could not move it. But Hendrick had now come up; disrobing himself till he was in the costume of ancient Gaul, he brought his sturdy team over, hitched

his treck-tow to the end of ours, and with a long pull and a pull together, placed us on the opposite bank.

This spruit was a very bad place, for, independent of its abruptness, it was so marshy that the wheels sunk many inches underneath the surface of the soil.

Hendrick's wagon followed and got through without casualty, but not without a hard struggle; Pater was less fortunate; not only did he stick, but even with the assistance of Hendrick's team he could not get out, so the third team (ours) had to be put on, and even then the cattle seemed to have a very difficult part to perform. At last all were across; we pushed up the opposing bank, and after half an hour's treck halted in front of a white farmhouse, with large cattle kraal attached.

We had scarcely done so when Morris came up; he had several ducks, the common species of this part of the country (*Querquedula Hottentota* of Smith), which are a handsome dark-brown colour, not distinguished by any gaudy feathers, and about the size of our widgeon. After a survey of the game I went over to the house, which I found crowded with Boers, all pretty well "on." As soon as I entered, the senior of the party asked me to drink with him, which I did, driver William acting as interpreter. No sooner, however, had I finished the first glass, than another requested me to repeat the operation. I hate to refuse hospitality, for certainly this was meant as such, and I drank again; but when a third insisted that I should have a glass at his expense, I was compelled to refuse. Flesh and blood can stand a great deal, but not much bad Hollands. These men were keeping New Year, the great holiday, with them, of the twelve months.

But here their kindness did not terminate: there was a grand party going on at a house four or five miles farther along the road, in consequence of a marriage that had taken place, and to this we were cordially invited; and as an inducement to accept the invitation, we were informed that a young English lady was one of the guests. I gave a conditional promise, for I did not know how Morris would feel on the subject, and without him I was resolved not to go. However, all the Boers immediately afterwards assembled outside on horseback, ranged themselves in a line across the road, like a troop of cavalry, and giving a war-whoop, started for the scene of rejoicings as fast as spur and whip would make their steeds go.

Poor William had drunk with every one. On our numerous good qualities he largely expatiated: we were so fond of him—we loved him like a brother—without him we never could have crossed the Drackenberg—and we most assuredly should come to see the English young lady. This was all well enough; but when I had to assist William—no light weight—and with the help of Hendrick and Pater hoist him on the wagon-box, I thought the jocular part was played out.

The road was straight, the track well defined; so with Umganey foreloping, and myself on the box with a powerful jambock to control the after-cattle, we got on so-so. William was a long time attacked with a musical *furore*: foreign songs appeared his *forte*, but in his list I could neither recognise "Die Wacht am Rhein," "Partant pour la Syrie," nor the "Marseillaise;" however, he appeared to have a very extensive *répertoire*. After completing his musical performance he became loquacious—gave me a slight sketch of his antecedents

and his relatives, both male and female ; then spoke as to his own ability, ending each sentence with, "I a good man," which no one denied ; but the oftener he repeated it the more emphatic he became. At length there was a long silence. I hoped that he had commenced to see the error of his ways, and was internally vowing to sin no more ; that his conscience told him he was a transgressor ; and that silently he contemplated the heinousness of his past conduct.

Presently we passed the scene of rejoicings ; the windows were all ablaze, such as you see at Buckingham Palace when a Court ball is taking place. Let me remark, *en passant*, that so well do they manage these things here, that they had neither soldiers nor police to resist the mob or make the conveyances keep order.

We did not halt, but passed on to the next outspanning-place ; before we reached which, our wagon stuck in a spruit, and all the efforts of two teams of cattle could not extricate us. So there we had to make up our minds to remain all night.

Half-an-hour after the abrupt halt we had been brought to, William presented himself ; his expression was sad, his clothing disordered. I expected nothing more than that he had come to ask me to examine the medicine chest and give him a bolus or skilfully mixed draft of the most potent ingredients. With a due pause, sufficient to give dignity to his words, in very measured and very concise terms, he said, "Bass, I am so hungry !" With gravity becoming the occasion I referred him to Imp.

That day had been one of great excitement. I am not in the pristine heyday of youth ; I have got over the vanities attached to dress, or the questionable

longing for decorations ; nor do I now crave to dance with the belle of the ball, or take the intimate friend of the hostess—an heiress, possessed of the wealth of the Indies—down to dinner. No ; in the language of the poet, beautiful and expressive, “ I am simmering down,” therefore I wished to go to bed, and so did my friend.

There was no reason why we should not do so that I am aware of ; in truth, we had both got into our pan-jamas, and I was having the last few “ draws ” of my pipe before turning on my left side, when William raised the curtain of the wagon and begged to know if we were not going to attend the convivialities. Being most emphatically answered in the negative, we were informed that he was going. Very nearly was I saying, “ Go, and be hanged,” but politeness, an intuitive feeling by which we never lose anything, and strongly inculcated into me in my youth, caused me to pause ; therefore I only said, “ By all means, William ; but pray see that the cattle are tied up.” William retired, assuring me that that would be his first duty.

I had finished my pipe, and was composing myself to sleep on the left side ; thoughts of the disappointment the English Beauty would suffer by the two knight-errants of her own race not waiting on her being uppermost in my mind. Still, I did not sleep. I therefore tried the right side, but two or three reports of guns took place immediately afterwards, so still I did not sleep. I again reverted to the original position—it was unquestionably the right way to rest—and lay still, how long I don't know, but an age it appeared. Yet I did not sleep, so I tried my back, and endeavoured to count the hoops that supported the roof of the wagon.

"You're not asleep?" said a gentle voice.

"No, no—that is," endeavouring to pretend that if not actually asleep I was next door to it.

"I can't sleep," said the speaker; "it's no use, I have turned every way, and, tired as I am, I cannot sleep."

Inhuman monster that I am, I was delighted that some one else was situated in the same disagreeable position as myself.

"Can't you, though?" said I, pitying his misfortunes, not acknowledging my own; "what can be the cause?"

"Mosquitoes, I think."

"No, I have not heard any."

"Neither have I," said my friend.

So I got up and lit the lamp, quite out of commiseration for him, of course, and oh! oh! oh! the whole interior of the wagon was swarming with millions of the most diminutive gnats. They were on the bed-clothes, on the wagon roof, and when I looked at my legs and arms I commenced to think that instead of a white man I was a pepper-and-salt-coloured one.

We both sat up and entered into conversation, and were jolly on the subject, it was such a good joke. Scratch myself? No; a man of my calibre is above such weakness; but human patience could stand it no longer. I resolved to have one scratch; I did—one, two, three scratches, and the remainder of an hour was one uninterrupted scratch. At this time a happy thought struck me—I will get the rum and bathe my whole body with it. I did so, but the wretches were not only fond of the human species, but also fond of what the human species is partial to. I did not wait to see if I had been con-

verted into a black man, but rushed into my clothes, seized my pipe, and hurried to the highest ground I could find, and on a higher than it—the summit of an ant-hill—I sat down and thought—and thought how weak we were when a few midges could tickle us so. So great was my affection for my friend that I never thought of seeing what he did or how he was getting on; I had too much regard for his feelings to disturb him when suffering from human weakness.

Aurora's car was about to enter the east when William, the faithful and tried henchman, approached his lord and master, and after making a respectful obeisance, informs him that the enemy during the night had made a descent and carried off all his lordship's cattle, which, at the present moment, were being conveyed to the pound at Harrismith.

“Zounds, varlet, you lie!”

“No, Bass, I speak the truth.”

“Order my horse to be saddled and marshal my followers; begone! do my bidding.”

I rushed to the wagon, pulled on my boots, buckled on my long sword, saddle, bridle—or, rather, took my rifle, shoved a revolver into the holsters, and was about to jump into the saddle, when an emissary of the foe arrived to say the cattle would be released on payment of two pounds sterling, although they had eaten over an acre of mealies. The money was paid, the cattle were returned, and I rejoiced that I was prevented from shedding blood.

CHAPTER XIV.

GAME, GAME, NOTHING BUT GAME.

The Dutchman of South Africa—His 'Cuteness—How He Works the Oracle—My Soreness at being "Done"—We start after Game—My Gillie—A Persistent Dog—Elaborate Preparations to Discover Buck—Magnificent Sight—The Dog Spoils Everything—Is Slaughtered, but by Accident—Morris again Indisposed—Pony Attacked by a Snake—The Puff-Adder—About Snakes—A Splendid Chase—Bob comes to Grief and Bonte doesn't Bag his Quarry—"Murderous" Sport—The Butchers at Work—Coran—Mending and Tailoring—The Sewing Machine a Doubtful Blessing—The Birds of South Africa—Morris to be looked after.

TRULY the Dutchman of South Africa is a strange being; he is neither flesh, fish, nor good red herring, all of which I am more or less acquainted with; but one thing I can say as far as regards myself, whether he acts the manly part or the stupid part, the insignificant part or the cowardly part, when you settle difficulties with him you are morally certain to owe him money. I do not know how it is, but they are always dinning into your ears that they are so weak, so innocent, that you believe them the most abused class in the world; your suspicions are consequently lulled and your sympathies aroused, and thus you forget, or rather dislike, to show them that you disbelieve their assertions by exercising necessary prudence.

Many of my countrymen live among them and make fortunes. Heaven help me if I had a fortune to spend and lived amongst them! I would soon get rid of it. They don't "do" you like a Yorkshireman, a Glasgow-

man, a Yankee, or a Blue-nose; *their* little dodges you can learn with experience, but the Boer does it and you never learn how he works the oracle. Bah! I'll think no more about them, if it was not that in my opinion a man born north of the Tweed should never be done by any one.

We trecked on the following day, and at noon, during the halt, had every blanket out in the sun, and every stitch of raiment removed from our feverish bodies. I rode on in front, and although several shots presented themselves, I was too occupied in thought to avail myself of the opportunities.

No, I had been taken advantage of; the enemy had come like a thief in the night, and as a reward had the two gold sovereigns in his pocket. I wished sincerely that he might spend them at the low grog-shop where we halted yesterday, and be suitably punished by the liquor which his ill-gotten gains could purchase. It is no use grieving over spilt milk, not a bit, so I shall make up my mind to think no more of it; but it is hard to know that there are people who would take advantage of a young man from the (old) country like me, and in the middle of a desolate uninhabited velt, walk your cattle off to Harrismith. Harrismith! I hate the very name now.

When we outspanned that evening there was game, spring-buck and bless-buck round us in every direction; but as it was late and we had made a very long treck, we determined not to trouble them that evening, but be "up in the morning early, before the break of day."

A cup of cocoa and a biscuit sufficed, when off we started, Morris going one way and I the reverse. Each took an attendant. My gillie was a Kaffir that we

had picked up at Eland river; he had all the vices of the white man and none of the virtues of his own race. I and my Day-and-Martin-skinned Ganymede had not gone over a quarter of a mile, when we discovered that the black bitch that I have spoken of before was following us. Oberon tried to coax her to him, but no, she knew too much (she was an Africander dog). Then I tried; I spoke in the pleasantest tones and used the most endearing terms, but she refused to listen to the voice of the charmer; so she was peremptorily ordered home, and several rocks—not stones—hurled at her. All was useless, she would go with us, yet she would not be one of us. I crossed a ridge and quietly ascended the slope of another. On hands and knees I carefully crawled to the sky-line; as I approached it I resembled the tortoise in pace and the serpent in stealthiness. At last I reached the summit, and was about to look over. I thought it would be better to take off my cap first, to get more range of vision with less elevation. I did so, and then remembered that my head was bald and very polished, and as the sun was behind me the light might reflect off it; deeming that would not do, I accordingly plucked a handful of grass, and placing it on the top of my pate, inch by inch I raised myself; very little more would do it, very little; so half-inch by half-inch I pushed myself upwards. The grass on my head was now above the ridge; very little more would elevate my eyes sufficiently to command the view; on a rough calculation three-quarters of an inch and one barleycorn. Would you believe it? So cautious was I that it took four minutes and a half to accomplish this. My eyes had attained sufficient altitude, and—— Well, then, no

buck was there. The next hill we treated in exactly the same manner, but when we looked over a lagoon of water was discovered beneath us, with hundreds of wild beasts, bless-buck, and spring-buck, standing knee-deep, enjoying its refreshing influences ; many of them were within two hundred and forty yards, but as I felt convinced that Morris or some of the Boers would bring home game, I desisted firing, and enjoyed looking at their playful antics and innocent gambols. But confound that black dog ! she saw the game and dashed at it. In a moment all was confusion, for in an instant after they deployed into one unbroken line and made for a point to my right front, where the track bent. Making the best spurt I could, I rushed forward under shelter to cut them off, or at least see them cross the road. I was in time, and a prettier sight I never saw, for with one accord in succession they cleared it at a bound ; and strange to say, although within one hundred and fifty yards of them, I never looked along my barrel, or thought of doing so. I shall remember that sight as long as I live, and shall not the less enjoy it when I think that I witnessed it without murderous intentions. If I and my people had required food I should not have hesitated, but three better hunters than myself were out to kill game, and I knew they would not come home empty-handed.

On my way back to the wagons, about seven o'clock, I saw a solitary spring-buck in a hollow. I made a stalk up-wind to observe its habits, when the brute of a dog, watching my movements, got on an ant-heap, and discovered the game I wished to approach. With a bound she rushed down the face of the slope, and both spring-buck and hound disappeared over the neighbouring rise.

In a few minutes the abominable dog came back. She would neither allow herself to be caught nor driven home, so I took the smooth-bore from my Kaffir's hands—it was loaded with No. 5 shot—and as she skulked round at about eighty yards' distance, I determined to give her a reminder that when her company was not required, she had better not tender it against my will. I certainly did not mean to kill her, but I wished to hurt her, so I fired; she gave one bound in the air, a spasmodic struggle, and all was over. For what had happened I was sorry, but the brute brought it on herself. With Morris I discussed the matter afterwards, and the universal verdict was—served her right.

How many buck were killed that morning I do not remember, but my friend had been most successful. However, it took our own Kaffirs, and many friends and relations picked up by the roadside—for when there was meat forthcoming there were always relations to be found—two days to consume it. The skins of spring-buck are too delicate to be tanned, consequently are thrown away.

Morris indisposed again, showing feverish symptoms, and a very rapid pulse. As there is game all round about the wagons he wanted to go after it. I persuaded him not to, but keep under the wagon-tent out of the sun. I fear all I can say is of no use, for he will not believe that he is half as bad as I represent.

As soon as we outspanned I had the saddle put on the Basuto pony, and, taking Bonte and Bob with me, rode round a neighbouring hill to see what quantity of game there was at the back of it. Being attracted by the beauty of a new orchid, I dismounted to examine it,

and having done so, not being in a hurry, I slipped my arm through the bridle and walked leisurely forward. Bob was about ten yards in front of me, pursuing the same course, when suddenly he jumped on one side. I knew it was a snake that had alarmed him, so, dropping my reins, I proceeded to discover of what breed it was, and if possible destroy it. It was the small species of the puff-adder—the horned puff-adder—the *cerastes*, I believe, of the ancients, and which is represented to have been the reptile used by Cleopatra to compass her own destruction. It was lying on some bare sand, in the usual figure of 8 shape, a favourite attitude with all this family. I imagine their great thickness in proportion to their length is the reason they do not coil themselves up as other species do. The creature in question I soon dispatched with a stone, and examined the glands, which were surcharged with poison. The Boers and Kaffirs consider this one of the most poisonous of the numerous reptiles of this country. While speaking of snakes, another species, well known in the colony as the sheep-sticker, and pronounced to be very poisonous, from examination of specimens that I have killed, I am inclined to believe innocuous. On one occasion I saw a cat catch one in a lady's drawing-room, and so far did puss seize it from the head, that if the creature had been venomous its destroyer's life would have been sacrificed.

On returning to the pony, and taking hold of the reins, as soon as I advanced my hand to his head-stall to reverse them over his neck, he shied back as if in great alarm, and it required some minutes before he would permit me to closely approach. The reason of this conduct in so staid and proper-minded an animal

is obvious ; in handling the adder, some of the smell attached to its body must have adhered to my hands. How great and wise are the provisions of nature !

Besides the virulence of the puff-adder, there is another reason why it is more to be dreaded than the majority of other snakes. It is almost exactly the colour of the dark-brown sand, and is invariably to be found on it, with the lower part of the body slightly submerged in it. Again nature's wondrous handiwork shows itself ; for if the colour of the ground and reptile did not closely approximate, how could so sluggish an animal obtain its prey ? True, it can make one short quick spring, but it cannot crawl over the ground with the swiftness of other species.

Leaving the snakes alone (and a man who hunts in Africa will never be successful if he fears a snake in every bush or under every tuft of grass he passes, for his eyes must be elsewhere than watching his feet), I mounted the pony, and continued round the point of the hill. As I climbed one slope I saw several spring-buck and bless-buck go over the opposite ridge ; so, bearing off more to the right, so as to improve the wind, I cautiously advanced in the direction I thought they had taken. A large rock lay in my route, and under its shelter I left the pony, and keeping both dogs close to me, I carefully approached the crest with cocked rifle. A spring-buck, unconscious of my presence, stood three hundred yards off ; at least, I judged that to be about the distance. I took a cool collected aim, and pressed the trigger ; the ball passed over its back ; with the report a bless-buck, which must have been within fifty yards of me, jumped up ; the dogs saw it in an instant, and were in pursuit, while I greeted the quarry with

a couple of old-country hunting cheers. At first the hounds gained rapidly on their game, and I expected every moment to see Bob pin it by the ear, when he put his foot in a meercat hole, and completed two or three somersaults before he could pick himself up. Poor fellow ! he had no heart or power to go farther ; for, on three legs, with a woeful countenance he came to my side. In the meantime Bonte was making a famous race of it—several times I expected to see him lay hold ; once he did spring at the quarry's ear, but it artfully avoided the attack. Twice more the buck was compelled to turn to avoid being pinned ; but the pace commenced to tell ; the antelope was in condition and the dog was not ; so, willing in spirit but weak of body, he had to give up the chase ; and a splendid run it was, although there was no death at the finish.

But now I have time to examine poor Bob, who has enjoyed looking at the run quite as much as myself. "Wo, old man, wo !"—for know, gentle reader, that he is a queer-tempered beast—"there, that will do ; your shoulder is not out of joint as I expected, but you are badly shaken ; yes, old man"—why, surly Bob has actually licked my hand after putting him to so much pain.

By the time I was mounted and ready to go on, Bonte came up, looking rather shame-face, as the Chinamen say, still showing from his outstretched tongue and quivering limbs how hard he had tried to do his best.

Why did I miss my shot ? I hear asked. I incorrectly judged the distance, believing the spring-buck to be farther off than it was. In Africa it is currently believed that you more frequently undershoot

on account of the rarefication of the atmosphere. This is quite a mistake in my experience, and Morris complained to me of making the same error.

Hearing some shots off to the right, I rode half a mile in that direction, and witnessed a most destructive, I should say murderous, way of shooting. On a spring-cart—a conveyance not unlike an exaggerated tax-cart—were four Boers, each armed with a rifle: between the horses' heads was a Kaffir, leading them when required, and halting as directed. In front of the butchers was a large drove of several hundred spring-buck densely packed together, their distance from the shooters being about four hundred yards. Into this living phalanx these unfeeling monsters were keeping up a steady fusilade. Their success was all that such characters could desire, I regret to say.

After leaving the Boers I found the game so wild that I shot no more, although I must have seen many thousand head of buck in the three hours that I was absent from the wagons.

Just after we commenced to treck, Morris took the old pointer and one of the smooth-bore guns, and in a quarter of an hour shot six or seven coran. These are a splendid bird about the size of the hen capercailzie, and are excellent eating: they lay fairly to a dog, and require a lot of hitting. At night and morning they call incessantly, invariably when doing so being perched on the top of an ant-hill. At that time they are difficult to approach nearer than within eighty or ninety yards.

Of this genus I have found four distinct species, the largest and best being possessed of a beautiful chestnut-brown plumage, but without bars on its wings: weight

about 7 lbs. The next in size is black ; very much like our black game, with the exception of the tail : weight about $5\frac{1}{2}$ lbs. The third is brown ; only about one pound lighter in weight than the black. The fourth is about the size of a cock red grouse ; more thickly built, and disposed to sit much more closely than the others. The first and last frequent bushes and corn-fields ; the other two, the open velt. Their call is exactly like their name, *co-ran*. They belong to the bustard family.

Although plenty of game was in sight the following day, and several spring-buck were shot by the drivers, I did not leave the wagons, work being cut out for me in the shape of clothes-washing, mending, &c. &c. ; and it is perfectly surprising, if you neglect to attend to it, how the labour accumulates. “A stitch in time saves nine” is as true an adage as ever was spoken. The seam of one of the legs of my trousers had a rip an inch long. I postponed attending to it for a couple of days ; and when I did, it required quite a foot of sewing. Sewing-machines are the invention of the evil one, I believe ; for if the end of a thread that has been stitched by them once gets loose, there is no knowing where it will stop. My African experience has taught me quite a wrinkle : after you wash your moleskin coat and trousers, rinse them out in a solution of Condyl’s disinfecting powder and water. It has the effect of making them a grand stalking colour, and thoroughly cleanses them of all animal matter.

We broke up camp early next morning, and in two trecks reached Rhinoster river. During the greater portion of the day we kept disturbing a pretty little

bird about the size of a starling. It possesses a dark back, with lighter colouring underneath, and is a true lark. When the leading oxen would approach where it rested, it would abruptly flush, fly about thirty yards, then rise perpendicularly ten or fifteen feet, soar for a few seconds, and drop suddenly with closed wings into the velt.

It had no carol like our home musician, still uttered a pretty, musical, and lonely note, ptweet, ptweet, ptweet. It has been described by the ornithologist Smith, and is well known to the Boers. Some of the birds of South Africa certainly are most brilliant in plumage, particularly the bee-eater family, but, as a rule, they are less so than the birds of Mexico and South America. Another thing I would note, that although few of the birds in Southern America sing, many of those here do, and very sweetly; but it takes some time before the ear gets tuned to their voice.

Just before sunset we arrived at our halting-place: game seemed to be very abundant about it. In fact, some coran flew over the oxen while being unyoked, so Morris and I went after them. The hour was too late, and they were so wild we could not get within gun-shot.

About a hundred and fifty yards from the wagons was a pond about an acre in extent; a dozen ducks dropped into it, so I crawled behind some bushes, and caused William to go on the reverse side and flush them, thus driving them down on me. Into them I fired both barrels and knocked down five. Those that were shot dead soon drifted ashore; but the wounded gave William a most amusing chase, for sometimes he was up to his

waist in water. They were the Hottentot duck previously described, and are an excellent addition to the larder.

Morris, who will, in spite of remonstrance, keep moving about, is worse to-night. We cannot be more than seventy miles distant from Potschefstrom, where I am informed good medical advice can be obtained—news for which I am most thankful.

CHAPTER XV.

PAT MOLLOY—MORRIS BROKEN DOWN.

Hendrick's Splendid Shot—An Amusing Chase—Unearthing a Ratel—Search for "*Vater*"—A Comical but Inhospitable Old Woman—"Is it Water ye mane?"—A Drop of the *Crathur*—My Talk with Pat—"A Great Day for Ireland intirely"—Mrs. Molloy—Our Dissel-boom comes to Grief—Boers "Flitting"—The Head of the Procession—Ostriches not such Fools as they Look—Ostriches on the Offensive—How to Capture Them—The Vaal River—Making a Dissel-boom—In the Transvaal at Last—Charon—A Dear Bottle of Brandy—Getting the Cattle over the River—Poonah and his Little Tricks—Morris's Dislike to him—Potschefstrom—Imp absquatulates—A Queer Set of Physicians—Morris has to Return Home for his Health—Farewell—Alone.

HENDRICK possesses a very old double rifle, about sixteen-bore, although it shows the ravages of time and neglect, yet any one experienced in firearms can see at a glance that it has been once a splendid weapon. It bears the name of Purdey—no bad guarantee for a gun forty years ago. With this antiquated specimen of firearms he made a splendid shot this morning. The road, which here is straight and running due north, has on the left three bluffs projecting into the velt at a distance of 500 yards from the track. There were some spring-buck feeding, not all together, but scattered; he selected the nearest, and at a range of 400 yards bowled it over dead. Coran are here also very abundant, and with little trouble a heavy bag of them could be made.

The monotony of our journey was broken by a most amusing chase. The old pointer, who had struck the

trail of something, commenced to give tongue ; every dog in consequence rushed to her assistance, and commenced beating the heavy grass with such care and assiduity, that it was perfectly certain to all that some wild animal was in the vicinity. In consequence the wagons were halted, and drivers and Kaffirs alike went to discover what could be the unknown beast. After a time a hole was found, larger than an ordinary badger-earth, and the zeal of the dogs over it, and their desire to get into it, were truly absurd. However, big brutes like Bonte and Bob had no chance, but the little pointer had, so she bit the earth, scraped with her feet, and snapped at every dog that came near enough to impede her movements. William went for the pick, and having discovered the direction in which the hole led, dug down upon it. He had excavated about two feet when out he jumped, the pointer took his place, scratched for a moment, then made a grab, and holding on like grim death, partially dragged from the shelter a large black body. Next Bonte and then Bob got a grip of the unknown beast, and between them all it was dragged up on the velt. It was a regular repetition of "pull devil, pull baker ;" the plucky little pointer if anything displaying the most venom. The smell that arose around the scene of combat was most fearful, almost as bad as an American skunk's. Between blows from the whip-handles, and worrying from the dogs, the unfortunate was ultimately killed. It turned out to be a very large ratel, certainly quite, if not over, the size of a full-grown otter. The dogs of course got saturated with this dreadful liquid used as a weapon of defence, and they smelt so abominably as for days to perfume the wagons.

After our midday meal, I started forward on horseback to find out whether the ford of the Vaal river was passable, or whether it would be necessary to go lower down the stream to where there was a punt.

The nature of the country was much changed; instead of the flat velt covered with grass, the whole surface of the country is a succession of hills, clothed with dwarf timber. In consequence of this alteration in the landscape I lost my way, and wandered some time, yet hoping to find a track leading to the river, which I was aware must be due north.

At length I struck the trail of a wagon, which following up brought me first to a cattle kraal, then through an orchard, and afterwards to two houses, one inhabited, the other going through the course of construction. I went to the door of the former, and there met an old man; I asked for *vater*, and he shouted to some one within, "*Vater!*" with stentorian lungs. At length an aged woman came out, looked at me, gave a grunt, and turned on her heel. My appearance, it was quite certain, did not please her. From her expression I was satisfied that I should have to go without a drink. I was about to give up the task as hopeless, when she came again to the door, took a long stare and snorted, then retired into the interior of her dwelling.

She was the most comical-looking old woman I had ever seen; her height was equal to her breadth, and round her face hung a fringe of diminutive white curls. For a quarter of an hour I waited, still neither she nor the water came. In the adjoining tenement I heard hammering, and an occasional snatch of "The Wearing

of the Green," then a pause. Soon, in a deep sonorous voice, broke out—

“And I met with Napper Tandy,
And he took me by the hand,” &c.

“That’s the place for my money,” I inwardly thought. “There is no making a mistake what country owns the possessor of that voice.” So I took the pony by the bridle and looked in through the door; there I saw a man nailing up laths quite after the orthodox plasterer fashion.

“Good morning to you, Pat,” said I.

“Good morning to you kindly,” said he.

“Can I get a drink of water?” I inquired.

“Is it water you mane? lashings and leavings about here.”

So he jumped off his perch in search of the liquid I required. Soon he returned with an ample supply.

Producing my flask, I took a mild drink—his eyes were on me all the time.

“Would you like a drop?” I asked.

“Would a duck swim?” was the response.

So I poured out a stiff quantity and handed it to him. With a gulp he swallowed it; then with a grin, “That’s the illigant stuff; I’m thinking you fetched it from the ould counthry.” Of him I made inquiries as to my route, the most expeditious way of getting to it; to all of which he gave me satisfactory answers.

When about to take my departure, he threw down his hammer and nails, put on his coat, and exclaimed, “Begorra! that’s the last nail I’ll drive this blessed day! If the nēgurs (meaning the Boers) are in a hurry, they had better do it themselves.”

"I'm sorry I interrupted you."

"Niver a bit! I'm glad to see you; and a mile or two more or less to show you your way will only be friendly."

So in company we started. This was the best stage Irishman I ever saw, *au naturel*: he was as perfect as Dion Boucicault in *Miles na Cappaleen*; even his stick and his clothes had a Donnybrook Fair cut about them truly refreshing.

"And how do you like this country?" I asked.

"Like it, is it? Tell me the man that knows ould Ireland would like any foreign part," thinkingly he said.

"Yes, Ireland is a pretty place," said I.

"And you know it, thin?"—expressed by him very thoughtfully.

"Nearly all."

"And when were you there last?"

"Not for three or four years."

"Do you know Dublin?"

"I do."

"And Kildare?"

"Yes; and Baletore, and Naas, and Maynooth."

And at every new name I uttered his face expanded further and further, till he could contain himself no longer, but gave an "Hurrouch!" and brandished his stick as if he had "got the fever on" (an expression in use in America when Irishmen want to fight).

After subsiding a little, he gravely remarked, "This is a great day for Ireland intirely!"

I did not deny the fact, although I could scarcely see how the "gem of the sea" was to be affected by the present casual meeting.

To change the conversation, I inquired, "Are you married?"

"Married is it?"

"Yes."

"Well, thin, I am. Mrs. Molloy is what they calls a fine female; if size makes fineness, thin she is. Begorra! I wish I had her in Dublin to show at a pinny a head!"

"Is she as big as the mistress down below?"

"As big as that ould omadawn! May I never tell a lie, she'd make two of her!"

"You should be very happy."

"Maybe I am, maybe I'm not; but if I had to begin agin I'd sooner have the little finger of Nancy Murphy than all the Dutch *frows* in Africa. It's not joking I am—sorra a word of joke I'm saying."

On Pat led me the matter of two miles, walking at such a pace as to keep the pony in a trot. In front of a large farmhouse he stopped, telling me to remain where I was and he would go in and make inquiries. He did so, and soon returned with the information that the ford was impassable, and that the wagons must go to the ferry.

Just then the wagons came up, and, right or wrong, Pat must stand me a drink, and "the other jintlemen," meaning the drivers. So he stood it, and they stood it, till time was up, and the wagons must go forward, for several miles were yet to be passed before the outspanning-place was reached. The last I saw of Pat was going towards his home—his step was light and springy; and the last I heard of him was something or other always terminating with—

"And my name is Pat Molloy!"

"It was a great day for Ireland intirely!" he repeated to Hendrick and Pater and William three or four times at least; and those worthies thought that if a country was to be affected by my conduct, I was certainly a big man and deserving of great respect. There was a marked change in their manner towards me from that day.

A short treck over a very bad road brought us at length close to the Vaal river, when William, making a short turn and attempting to take the wagon over a grip caused by sun-cracks, broke the dissel-boom about a foot from where it enters the eye. I was present when the accident happened, and it was the result of utter carelessness. So, as might be expected, I did not bless him; no, on the reverse, I pitched into him most sharply. I was able to do this now, for if the worst had come to the worst, I could have myself driven to Potschefstrom, for I had not lived the last month for nothing. Again, it was too near pay-day for him to take serious notice of what I said. A splice, therefore, had to be constructed to get us to the margin of the river, still some miles off; and as this is ever a tedious operation, we were engaged on it upwards of two hours.

While thus employed, several families of trecking Boers passed us, their wives, families, stock, and *lares* and *penates* being all with them. They were a rough and dirty-looking lot, still well-grown, not bad-looking, people. The women wear a greased white cloth tied close over their faces, covering all from the eyes to the end of the chin. This is supposed to be a protection to their complexions, and gives a very strong reminder to the observer of Turkish women in their

zarmack at Constantinople. Mixed among their flocks and herds were a great number of tame ostriches, both young and old. This addition had a very quaint and unusual effect—something, truly, that European eyes are quite unacquainted with, whether in reality or picture.

These strange birds generally stalked at the head of the procession, and appeared to be on most excellent terms with all the domestic animals. Occasionally one would deviate to the right or left of the track to peck a mouthful of grass, but as soon as the driver would leave the road and shout at it, it would immediately fall into its proper place and march forward with the utmost demure gravity, as if to be guilty of an infringement of rules was the last thing it would think of. Ostriches always have an intensely stupid look, but they are not nearly such fools as the uninitiated would take them for; and although the most timid creatures on the earth when in a state of nature, in captivity or when domesticated they are bold and dangerous, more especially the males. Horse or rider indiscriminately they will attack, walking up to the object of their indignation with a quiet, measured stride, never evincing for a moment the slightest evidence of hostility—in fact, looking such fools that no one would imagine them capable of inimical ideas—when with a quick movement, done with great strength and velocity, they raise their foot and strike forward, the edges of the toes being so sharp that they will cut your clothes the whole length of the stroke. As they are too valuable to be knocked on the head, perhaps you turn to run from them, but their speed is such that an attempt thus to elude them is useless. The only plan then to be pursued is to throw yourself down, and lie still on your face or back. They

cannot kick you in these positions, but they will jump on you and trample all over you. While this operation is going on you may give vent to your feelings and satisfy your self-esteem by bestowing upon them a few reminders that two can play the same game.

By the time the Boers had passed we were again ready for the road—that is, with care and judicious driving we might reach the river without further casualties. We made the effort, and succeeded. On the Vaal river we found ten or twelve wagons outspanned, the owners of which showed anything but friendly feeling towards us.

The Vaal river here is about the width of the Thames at Hampton Court, very sluggish, with rock and clay margin. The reach where the ferry was extended miles downwards and about two hundred yards upwards; here it was entered by a grand rapid. The banks were clothed with trees, principally mimosas, while on the opposite shore were two houses, one belonging to the former ferryman, the other to his successor.

Before we could do anything a new dissel-boom had to be made, so I sent William into the woods to procure a suitable stick. After a long delay he returned with one, and here his labours ceased, for he had no more idea of hewing it down or fitting it than the man in the moon. I appealed to Hendrick and Pater, but to no purpose; they knew no more than William, so there was nothing for it but to do it myself. I certainly did not like the job, for a dissel-boom is a weighty thing to handle, and all Cape woods suitable for such a purpose are very heavy, and, worse than all, the sun was burning hot, and no shelter was to be obtained to work under.

At this juncture I could not expect assistance from

even Morris, for he was now dangerously ill—regularly laid up. In the morning I had cauterised his throat; for some time after it appeared as if the operation had given him relief, but in an hour or two he relapsed to his distressed state. Without a dissel-boom we could not proceed, with one we might be in Potschefstrom by this time next day, so there was nothing for it but to go to work; so, stripping—that is, retaining only my trousers, shirt, and slippers—the tool chest was hauled from its place, and I commenced my labours.

First the tree had to be hewn down to the proper size, then the end fitted to the eye, the iron mounting removed from the old dissel-boom and let in and bolted on the new. By six o'clock the job was finished, and never before had my American experience with the axe stood me such good service. But it was fearfully warm work and no light exercise, so that I was bathed in a bath of perspiration; what I dreaded most was the effects of the sun—*coup de soleil*, or some other of those ills attributed to its power; fortunately I suffered from none of them.

Soon after six the embarkation commenced, our wagon, as usual, first; in ten minutes after it was placed on board the punt the ferryman's cattle drew it ashore on the soil of the Transvaal; when we halted on reaching the summit of the bank I could have given a cheer, with three times three, for we had now crossed Natal, the Orange Free State, and had entered the *ultima Thule* of Christendom, had there not been my friend lying in the wagon ill, very ill. Throughout life bitter and sweet go together; sometimes the one predominates, sometimes the other, but separate them you cannot; there is neither perfect happiness nor perfect misery—

at least, I have never known the last—for always there is a ray of light left, possibly only a feeble shred, such as we see in the west long after the sun has set.

The ferryman would have a bottle of brandy ; I was equally resolved he should not, for our supply was limited, and it was determined to keep it solely for medicinal purposes. As we owed this man two pounds, when we came to settle the bill a bottle of brandy in part payment was asked—he would allow ten shillings for it. “No, I would not part with any.” But when he would deduct a pound if I would comply with his wishes, and he pathetically added that his wife was very sick, I gave in. The last part of his entreaty did the business, and Henessey’s three star French was transferred to this Boer Charon, who, by the way, was a very civil fellow, and spoke a good deal of English. But although the wagon was over, the worst part of the job had still to be done—to get the cattle across ; and to save expense they were to swim. Consequently, round the whole bunch of bullocks a cordon of Kaffirs and Boers crowded, and by degrees they were forced nearer and nearer the water ; but in our team was one perverse ox, Poonah by name, who the moment you had him, as you thought, safe, would charge through the line and go scampering over the country, with all the naked Kaffirs in pursuit, and a pretty dance he would lead them, till both he and they were perfectly exhausted, when he would return in the most submissive way, join the other cattle, and ask sympathy from them, as if he were the most abused beast in the world, and his comrades were certain to give it. I think four times that evening Master Poonah successfully practised this game, and as he figures much

in the after narrative I will describe his personal appearance. His head would have done justice to any prize bull, the horns hung down; in colour he was black, with a compact, powerful body, standing on short legs; so now you have the darling's photo. I always liked him; his very roguishness and trickery made me laugh often, and it is a pleasant thing sometimes to laugh—*dulce est desipere in loco*.

He was a wise beast too, very willing when once in the yoke. Even when pulling his best, if I happened to be on the box of the wagon, and shouted his name, "Ay, Poonah, treck Poonah!" he would begin to trot like a horse. He was always hungry and always fat, and ever ready to be ringleader in mischief. The other oxen were very fond of him; he would rush into their ranks when yoked or bunched, and no hostile horn would be turned against him.

But Poonah had an enemy; it was Morris. "There goes that brute Poonah again!" when shouts would indicate that a chevy was taking place, and right he was almost certain to be. Again, he would say, "I hope to goodness a lion will jump that beast when we get up country." To this I could not agree.

Well, my friend had been tempted from the interior of the tent to have a cup of cocoa after our first halt. Umganey had brought his stool and placed it for him against the dissel-boom, and cup in hand he was waiting for the liquid to cool—I wish the reader could tell me what keeps its heat so long as cocoa—when Poonah, who had broken away from his comrades, sought to make the wagon a dodging-place to avoid the persevering Kaffirs—it was a common trick of his, to play hide-and-seek round the wagon. However, the

pursuers discovered his whereabouts, made a dash after him, but not to be beaten, he turned round the front of the wagon, cleared the dissel-boom in splendid style, but, alas ! sent all my friend's cocoa, which he had been taking so much trouble to cool, flying to the winds. "Blast Poonah !" was all he said. The language was strong, but under the circumstances justifiable.

I did not laugh, poor Morris was too ill ; but if it had occurred to any one else, even to myself, I think I should have, as Artemus Ward expresses it, "snickered over it."

Before break of day the cattle were again in the yoke. Before us lay a range of stony hills, possibly eight or nine hundred feet above the plain, which were sparsely covered with bushes. Through them was a pass ; once over it we should see the long-looked-for Potschefstrom. . Although the road was good, and the ascent gradual, the cattle seemed to lag on the way. At length the sun rose—a glorious birth he had that morning, for there was not a cloud to detract from his splendid brilliancy. The pass is reached, on slowly we progress through it, and suddenly, at a turn of the road, bursts on us a magnificent extensive plain, margined with hills, in its centre a small white town, almost smothered with greenest poplar trees, blue gums, and willows. It is Potschefstrom !

But although Potschefstrom is only about seven miles off as the crow flies, yet the road of necessity becoming tortuous from ravines, and one very bad water-course, the Mooi river, we have to traverse quite ten miles before reaching the outspanning-ground, a mile to the westward of the town. From the name of the river on which it stands, and which forms two

sides of a square, Potschefstrom is frequently called, especially by the Dutch, Mooi-river-dorp; in fact, when you get up country you will hear it spoken of among the inhabitants by no other appellation.

Our arrival here has done Morris a little good. I believe the interminable plains we have been passing over for the last twenty days depressed his spirits, and with a sick body it is very hard to resist it. Persons on coming into this part of the country invariably suffer severely from some ailment or other. The water is accredited as the cause; in my opinion it may assist, but elevation, and consequently unaccustomed rarefaction of atmosphere, has more to do with the indisposition than is generally believed.

Pasture all round the camping-ground there is an abundance of, still it is not safe to let your bullock graze alone, without the forelopers being in attendance, for there are such things as mealy fields, and nothing delights a Boer more than sending cattle to the pound, particularly if they belong to a travelling Englishman. They are asserted to have a *penchant* for sending their neighbour's cattle also; who could then expect that a stranger's would be safe? In Umganey I have long been aware that I possess a most valuable servant; his work he conscientiously performs, seeking neither to thrust his doings under your eyes nor to make market out of them. For performing his duty I do not applaud him—he is but doing his duty, and for that he is paid; but as a good and faithful servant, often taking work out of my hands, I give or send him a piece of tobacco, for which he is very thankful.

I have forgotten to state that Imp, the little scamp Imp, who was in charge of the culinary department,

bolted when within a few days of here. I rode back many miles in search of him, but was unsuccessful. The vicinity of the Diamond-fields was too great a temptation for his principles, and he gave us the slip, for there wages were at sensation prices. He was not much loss, for he was an eye-serving scamp, and a little pilferer to boot.

Thus we have arrived in Potschefstrom with a driver, the man engaged at Eland river, Jim and Umganey. Among our cattle and other animals, I am thankful to say, we have suffered no loss.

On the morrow, at an early hour, Morris and self went into the town to find out the leading physician; they all, three in number, occupied this position, so we interviewed them in succession. After this, my friend preferred placing himself in my hands as to treatment and advice; I wished to persuade him otherwise, but he would not listen to the arguments I could use to the contrary. Certainly I must say that the doctors of Potschefstrom were a rough-looking lot, and by choice I should much sooner have trusted a cow in their hands than myself; in saying this it must be remembered that a change for the better may have taken place since I was there. After our visit to the town we had a consultation, and I emphatically insisted that the sooner he went home the better. To this there was much opposition, but ultimately I carried the day.

That evening Morris left me by the mail cart for the Diamond-fields, a journey of over 400 miles; there there was communication with Port Elizabeth twice a week by Cobb and Co.'s coaches. So, with luck, he might reach the coast in twelve days, or possibly be back in England in little over six weeks.

Poor Morris ! I had a great job to get him off ; he fought against going—against returning before he had shot elephants, lions, and such-like ; but his life was at stake if he persevered further, so I was resolved, as far as in me lay, to prevent his making so rash a venture. I succeeded, but it was not without a severe struggle.

Well, I saw him off, and rode with the coach a mile or two ; at length I approached the window at which he sat, took his right hand in my left, gave it a long squeeze, murmured a “ God bless you ! ” and I was alone. Yes ; and I *grat*, as they say in Scotland, for I had learned to love him for himself, and to know him as a true, kind, noble-hearted man.

I was alone now ; no friend to help me, none to advise me, none to counsel me ; in future I was to fight the battle single-handed.

CHAPTER XVI.

FRIENDS IN NEED.

A Lazy Driver—Reminiscences of Holly—Suspensions of Underhand Conduct—Crossing a River—At Klerksdorp—My Novel-reading Servant Bolts—Kind Friends—Half a Day's Shooting—Two Hyænas done for—A Driver is Lent to me—The Boers at Klerksdorp—The Brothers Rous—Immense Foolishness of the English—Mr. Rous on Nile Explorations—Superstitions of the Boer—A Witch called in—The Prettiest Village in South Africa—Abundance of Fruit—Well-conditioned Porkers—A Look Round—Fruit not to had for Love or Money—A Good-looking Woman—Irritating inhospitality—A Present of Fruit—A Return Gift of Sweets—"Jim a good Boy"—Jim Decamps—The other Boys assert their Innocence—Deserted by all my Attendants save one—My Lecture to Umganey—A Lady Visitor—I decline to pursue Jim.

WHAT I thought, or what I did not think, in my loneliness is not to the purpose. I went to work: unloaded the wagon, and sent it round to the blacksmith's shop for repairs; also turned out every case to learn the better what could be dispensed with, and so lighten the load, for it was necessary that I should have as few *impedimenta* as possible.

For two days I toiled without ceasing, and on the third was ready for commencing the journey. A firm of merchants advised me to engage some one speaking English who was conversant with the country north, as without a companion I should certainly go melancholy mad. Not wishing to go melancholy mad, I engaged a man they recommended. This fellow, who was to drive, to look after the cattle, to provide game when necessary, did absolutely nothing but lie on his back in the wagon, smoke, and read novels.

But before we go further, let me revert to a dinner given me by the members of the most clannish race on the earth. In happening to speak of Holly, one of the guests said, "I remember him well." Entering into a description of his person, my acquaintance continued—"He and a number of his companions who were engaged in the Basuto war came up here; as they had been fighting in our cause, it was decided among the worthy burghers that they should be entertained at a dinner, and the finest public dinner that had ever been furnished in Potschefstrom was provided in their honour. But what do you think they did? After all had become seated at the table, each of the guests seized a roast duck and belaboured his neighbour with it. Disgraceful, sir, most disgraceful! In fact, I think that at my office I can find a report of the matter, in which they are characterised as the most ungentlemanly gentlemen that ever visited Potschefstrom—a severe stricture certainly, but deserved, as you will yourself admit."

From what I knew of the hero of the "Red, White, and Blue," I quite believed that he was one of the "most ungentlemanly gentlemen that ever visited Potschefstrom."

The canny Scot is a wily bird, not to be caught with chaff, but the kindest-hearted being in the world if you know how to take him. Klerksdorp was not on my route, but I wished to go there, as two gentlemen of that nationality had made it their home, so we turned off to the left, and, although only distant from Potschefstrom thirty miles, it took me four days to reach it. This delay was caused by the man I had hired to go up country with me. I am still under the impression that he was employed by the person who recommended him

(scoundrel, I should say) to do all he could to thwart my getting on, and compel me to sell out and return. From information I afterwards received this impression is confirmed, and I will say that the plot was so well organised that the difficulties, annoyances, and constantly recurring standstills were enough to make any man grow sick at heart. Before reaching Klerksdorp I had to pay sum after sum for getting pulled out of spruits, holes, &c. &c., and the worthy I had hired was never with me to assist. It soon appeared that it was but to get into a hole for him to absent himself. That he knew nothing about wagon-driving, and that he was a foul-mouthed bully, I discovered before he and I were together an hour. The name of the recommender and his *protégé* can be learned from me by any one who desires to travel in Africa, and wishes to avoid scoundrels.

However, although alone, I was not to be daunted. About ten o'clock one morning we approached Klerksdorp. Between us and it was a deep rapid river, with very rough bottom. Before entering this stream I halted the team to give the cattle breathing-time, and also have an inspection of the ford. But where was the person who should have taken all this labour off my shoulders? Where? lying on my bed reading a novel! Without his assistance, however, I hoped to get through. The cattle approached the water, and, just before entering it, I called a second halt, for I had only Jim for a driver, and Umganey to forelope; for this new man, who was to make all my ways easy, and all my paths peace, had frightened off the wagoner who had come with me all the way from the Eland river. At length the word was given, in went the cattle, Umganey

hauled at the heads of the leaders, and Jim cracked his whip nigh the flank of the after-beasts; for a moment there was a slacking of the pace, sufficient to cause me to think that the team were coming to a standstill, so I rushed, waist deep, into the stream, armed with a spare whip, and plied it on the refractory. All the oxen now pulled, and pulled together, so at length the wagon reached the opposite brow, and we were safe from what might have been a grave misfortune. Down the middle of the village I passed, and outspanned near the store of Messrs. Taylor and Leask, my countrymen,

“Nursing my wrath to keep it warm.”

I kept my pent-up fury to myself; so, when my new *employé* came to me, and congratulated me on my driving, I did not refer to his delinquency, and pretended to take all that he said as a well-earned compliment. In a day or two after I wished to unpack, and alter the load into a more convenient form. Of my intention I informed him the previous night; but my wishes were not of the slightest importance, so I had to do all the packing and unpacking alone, for my servant—*forsooth!* preferred to go fishing.

I knew a row was at hand, and when the storm did come I was aware it would be severe, for flesh and blood can only bear a certain strain without resisting. However, I was saved from such an indulgence of my temper, for the object of my indignation came to me and stated that he desired to go to Potschefstrom to see his wife: borrowed clothes, waterproofs, and blankets; and although he had received an advance of fifteen pounds, never returned. Better, possibly, that it was so; for if he had remained, and continued

to manifest indifference to my success, I should most certainly have taken the law in my hands.

Messrs. Taylor and Leask were most kind. I had an invitation to take all my meals at the latter's table, and took advantage of it, and for a short period enjoyed the comforts of a home: very pleasant after all the hardships I had suffered. But I am certain the reader has been treated to a sufficiency of disagreeables, so I will change the subject.

I was still without a driver, and it was absolutely necessary to procure one before going farther. My new friends sent far and wide to procure one, but until they succeeded, I went in for shooting, to pass the time. Mr. Taylor was an excellent sportsman, and a good shot; so I will give the outline of half a day's performance. In his company I started after dinner to ride to a neighbouring wooded ridge. We each took a boy to look after the horses. A pointer of my friend's, and Bonte and Bob, accompanied us. The distance we had to go before commencing our sport was about three miles. Scarcely had we commenced work when sundry partridges and coran were killed; then a *diker* doe and fawn were bagged, Bonte having a splendid course after the former before he pinned it.

The strip of wood that we were shooting was not over one hundred yards wide, and a mile and a half in length; and during the whole distance we followed it, game of some description was flushing in our front. When near the end of the beat, my companion signalled me. I joined him, and without asking questions followed him up a slope on the velt. Approaching its top we both went on our hands and knees till the summit was reached, when, looking over, before us,

within about eighty or ninety yards, were several hundred spring-buck. My friend had changed his shot-gun for a rifle; I still retained my former weapon, useless on such large game at so long a range, as it was loaded with shot.

Well, he covered first one, then another, and ultimately a third, but his Winchester refused to explode; by this time the spring-bucks had become alarmed, and scampered off, and the two greyhounds had a grand run after them, although from beginning to end of the chase it was evident to any one that they were outpaced at every stride. This did not matter, because we had killed more meat than we could consume; and whether or no, both beef and mutton were to be purchased at Klerksdorp.

From where our late shooting had been performed, we galloped over a ridge of high land, and found ourselves on the margin of another wood. This we shot over, and very much added to our bag, so much so that both the Kaffirs were loaded with birds, while the dicker bucks were hung across the horses' backs, tied in their place by D's attached to the cantles of our saddles.

A third cover was next to be shot, but to get there we had to cross an open velt about two miles broad; in doing so, up jumped a wolf (striped hyæna), and both the greyhounds dashed off in pursuit. On closing with the quarry Bob fell as usual, but he was on his legs a moment afterwards: this accident gave old Bonte the advantage, who seized his prey by the flank, and both pursuer and pursued rolled over in the dust together, Bob in the meantime coming to his companion's assistance, when conjointly they soon worried every particle of

life out of the luckless brute. In the meantime Taylor galloped another hyæna to a standstill and shot it.

By sunset we were home, each ornamented with a brush, a bag of game that required two Kaffirs to carry, and a buck behind our saddles. Such was the result of half a day's shooting in the immediate vicinity of Klerksdorp.

As no driver could be procured for love or money, Mr. Leask most considerately lent me his own private man Jacob. He was to take me as far as Zeerust in Marico, and there assist me to find a suitable person to take his place.

But before leaving Klerksdorp I would say a few words upon the Boers I met there. To Scotchmen they are partial; on Englishmen they look with eyes of suspicion. Want of education and ignorance of the world are the cause of this, fostered by stories circulated by deserters from the British army.

At Klerksdorp there were two brothers residing, who had amassed considerable fortunes by taking oranges, peaches, apples, poultry, &c. &c., to the Diamond-fields. Their status in life had always been such as to justify any person imagining that they would not be quite as ignorant as their fellows.

An anecdote about them, true I can vouch for, and most absurd, I do not hesitate to narrate.

One of these brothers was enlarging upon the immense *foolishness* of these Englishmen. They are spending no end of money to find out the source of the Nile, and actually send people into Africa south of the equator to discover its source. "Well, is not the world round?" Taking an orange to illustrate the matter, and drawing a line round the centre of

it, "Here is the equator. You see where the equator is, don't you? Well, the fools expect to find that the Nile rises on this side of it; but how on earth can men with common sense believe that water will run uphill? Well, these Englanders are the greatest fools; what say you?"

And all agreed with him.

The Boers are also very superstitious, and believe sincerely in witch-doctors, sorcerers, *et hoc genus omne*. What I am going to tell will scarcely be credited, but still it is true. Carl Rous's brother got sick—very ill indeed, the fact being that he was so miserly that he denied himself the necessaries of life. He sent for me to come and see him, which I did in the company of Mr. Leask. I saw at once that the man was absolutely starving himself, and my companion agreed in my views. In consequence I ordered him chicken broth, wine, &c. &c. But no, he would not be so extravagant, he was a poor man; and all other excuses such as men like he would make were urged by this rich Boer.

Getting weaker, he called in an old hag of a Kaffir woman, who was supposed to possess supernatural power. After feeling his arms and legs, looking in his eyes, casting the bones, and going through a variety of absurdities, she gave him a prescription, which of course did the wretched man no earthly good.

About ten on a Monday morning I left Klerksdorp. Jacob, Mr. Leask's driver, wielded the whip, Umganey foreloped, and Jim followed in rear leading the horse.

To simplify matters, and as much as possible to remove chances of obstacles, I had purchased six new seasoned oxen, in good working condition. Thus

reinforced, and under the experienced whip of the present driver, we got over the road rapidly.

Spring-buck, bless-buck, and wildebeest were abundant, and so tame that often they stood and gazed at us within one hundred and fifty yards of the wagon. As I had plenty of meat—Mr. Leask having at the last moment kindly presented me with a fat sheep—I left these graceful and beautiful specimens of the wild game of South Africa for the rifle of those who required their flesh more than I did.

Outspanning in the heat of the day for two hours, again the cattle were put to, and so well did my team now work that by six o'clock we were entering the suburbs of Hartebeestfontein, by long odds the prettiest village, or rather hamlet—for it does not possess over half a dozen dwellings—that I had seen in South Africa.

Let me try and describe it. On one side of the track, and about equally distant from it, is a row of large, white, one-storeyed houses, with vegetable-gardens in front. On the other side of the road is a never-failing stream of water, across which are orchards covering a hundred or more acres. The trees were groaning under their loads of ripe fruit, oranges, apples, plums, peaches, pears, and walnuts all being mixed together and attempting to rival each other in the quantity of their produce. At the end of the village was a green, and in its centre a very large pond, beautifully sheltered with weeping willows, covered with ducks and geese. Everybody and everything looked prosperous: fat cattle and horses rested under the shadows of the trees; pigs that had never known sorrow—if rotundity of figure is a proof of this—snorted, frisked, and grubbed about in

every direction, while domestic fowls appeared to be innumerable.

Taking Jacob with me, I strolled through the village. He spoke Dutch well, English fairly. Our first effort was to find a shop; we discovered two, but both were shut up—at least, no amount of hammering brought either owner or *employé*.

This was unfortunate, as several things were wanted. However, they might be open in the morning. In the meantime we would go and buy some fruit. Crossing the green, we found two ox-wagons loaded with it. I told Jacob to get a bushel or so, and make the best bargain he could. It was no use; all his efforts were unavailing: they would not part with any. I told Jacob to make a higher offer. No; they did not wish to sell, and to give away they were not inclined. And during all this time dozens of oranges and apples were rolling off on to the ground, and being greedily devoured by the pigs. It was very trying, but what was to be done?

We left these inhospitable people, and walked towards the wagon. Near the corner of the road was a splendid orchard. I looked over the fence, and there was a really good-looking white woman sitting on a plank over the stream, bathing her feet in the water. She might have been about thirty, and certainly belonged to the better class. Jacob spoke to her—requested her to sell us fruit—stated how urgently we required it, &c. &c. She dangled her feet in the stream, never altered her position, but refused to sell what we wanted.

This perverseness made me feel quite cross, so I went my way anything but rejoicing. By the roadside

grew a quantity of prickly pears; as I could have no other fruit, and it is almost a necessary of life to me, for want of better, Jacob and I commenced to gather them.

I was enjoying my supper about sunset, Umganey was waiting on me, and Jacob was polishing out the pot—the driver's perquisite—when two very pretty children, respectively about twelve and ten years of age, came up to the encampment, bearing between them a heavy and large basket. It was filled to overflow with fruit, the top layer consisting of enormous bunches of delicious grapes.

The oldest child spoke in Dutch. Jacob stood by to interpret. "These are for the Englander—not for money."

"But ask the child who sent them," said I to Jacob—which question resulted in my discovering that the good-looking woman whom I had seen bathing her feet was the donor.

I happened to have some bottles of candies, acidulated drops, &c., in the wagon-box, laid in for exactly such occasions, so I gave my charming young visitors a liberal supply, and the happy little creatures went off home perfectly delighted with their present; for the Boers are wonderfully fond of sweets, and they are so expensive, on account of the distance they have to be carried, that they are beyond the means of very few.

The lads and myself enjoyed very much the welcome gift; and as they had had a hard day of it—for from Klerksdorp to Hartebeestfontein is a long day's journey—I made up my mind to be liberal, and give each a glass of grog when Jacob got his ration issued. As usual on such occasions, Master Jim kept us all in good

nature by the amusing antics that he performed. Besides, he was a really good-looking fellow, and nothing seemed to damp his animal spirits, which caused him to become most popular among his companions. My appreciation of him was marked by my having advanced him to the post of assistant-driver, with the prospect of becoming chief. His wages also had been doubled.

After I had seen that good fires were lighted, and everything snug for the night, I turned into the wagon, and went to bed. Till I fell asleep, I heard Jacob, Umganey, and Jim carrying on a most animated discussion, which several times terminated with, "Jim a good boy! Jim a good boy!" If I had thought at the moment that my affection had been misplaced, that this scoundrel was harbouring guile, I would have been out of bed in an instant, and reproached him with his duplicity; but such a thought never entered my brain. I went to sleep, confident of the affection of my followers.

Next morning, in mustering my people, Jim was absent. At first I thought he had wandered off into the village, so took no notice of the matter; but when it became time for the cattle to be put in the yoke, and he did not make his appearance, I became suspicious.

At length Jacob informed me that he thought Jim had run away, for all his clothes were gone. Even then I could not believe it to be true, for I had always treated him with kindness and consideration; and were not his last words ringing in my ears—"Jim a good boy! Jim a good boy?"

But as the day waxed older there ceased to be any

doubt that I had been given the slip, and thus lost the last of my Pieter-Maritzburg servants.

I could not help thinking that Jacob and Umganey had connived at the scoundrel's departure, so I constituted myself into a court of inquiry, and cross-questioned them on the subject; for I considered that if they had known the runaway's intentions, they owed me a duty, as faithful *employés*, to inform me of the matter. Jacob earnestly denied any knowledge of the affair, and said that he and Umganey had left Jim by the fire when they had gone under the wagon to sleep, and that he had not seen him afterwards. Jacob, acting as interpreter to Umganey, reiterated this statement, so I was bound to believe that they spoke the truth.

At least half a dozen servants now had thus left me, and in the most unexpected manner, so who could I rely on? Umganey was the only one left who had come from Natal, and why should I trust him more than the others? To all I had behaved equally kindly, yet without a word of warning—when, too, their services were so necessary to me—they had stolen away. Jacob being only lent me, I now possessed but one attendant, and at any moment I might be without him.

Thinking thus, I made a speech to Umganey through Jacob: I told him that if he did not like me, if he was tired of his work, if he had a desire to leave, he had better tell me, and do so openly. To this Umganey protested, vowing he would go with me anywhere and everywhere. I could not help feeling doubtful of the truth and sincerity of what he said, reminding him that Master Jim had spoken in the same strain.

With a quiet earnestness that was so forcible as to astonish me, Umganey simply said, "Jim Kaffir, not

Zulu." And, as the lad spoke, his good-natured countenance became quite sad.

Soon after I had a visit from the lady who sent the fruit, accompanied by her two handsome children. Jacob informed her of the desertion of Jim; she immediately counselled my seeing the Field-cornet, whom she would send one of the children for. This official soon put in an appearance; knew that Jim had passed through the village in the morning, and had taken the Diamond-fields road, and was no doubt travelling with some wagons that had passed *en route* to Griqua Land West. He would have him back by this time to-morrow, have him well flogged, &c., all for seven dollars, the money to be paid in advance.

At first I felt inclined to listen to this proposal. I thought with what pleasure I should take the scoundrel by the ear, and remind him that Jim is a good boy; but after consideration, a knowledge that I could not retain him against his will, and that forced service was not the kind I wanted where I was going, induced me to decline the worthy Field-cornet's proposal. Whether it was love for the dollars or zeal in his profession, this Boer functionary seemed disgusted at my non-acceptance of his assistance.

From that day Umganey was promoted to the rank of my own personal attendant and cook, also placed in charge of the stores—even of the tobacco. While both Jacob and he were to be on the look-out at all the kraals we passed for a lad to forelope.

Although I did not order Jim to be pursued and brought back, for a week, if not longer, I had ringing in my ears the complaisant words—"Jim a good boy! Jim a good boy!"

CHAPTER XVII.

ABOUT THE TRANSVAAL—SOME NATIVE TRIBES.

Hints to Those about to Emigrate to the Transvaal—The True Source of its Wealth—The Crops that can best Grow there—Difficulty of Obtaining Labour—Natives and Boers—The Macalacas—Shots on the Road—Belong—Tame Spring-bucks—Mrs. Leask's Pet—Tame Cranes—Their Odd Ways—Biased Judges—My Present Driver—How he Does his Work—My Personal Interest in the Cattle—Wisdom of Oxen—Wildebeest—The Prey of the Martini-Henry—Ant-hills—The Dogs on the *qui vive*—A Cobra di Capello—It Escapes.

OUR next halting-place, about twenty miles beyond Hartebeestfontein, was a large farm in the centre of an open plain, well covered with grass, and about eighty acres of mealies in the immediate vicinity of the dwellings, which were more numerous, larger, and in better repair than usually seen on a Boer estate. There was also here an abundance of water, without which no number of acres can be of the slightest value.

At the present time many people talk, and, I believe, think seriously, of emigrating to the Transvaal, and an agency has been appointed in London for the sale of lands. Be warned in time—do not part with a single shilling till you have inspected your intended purchase, and then on no account be induced to have it unless you are guaranteed that the springs or water-courses upon it are unfailing. You cannot have everything perfect, and the want of water is what militates against these upland plains.

As I have said before, the Transvaal is essentially a

stock-raising country—the true source of wealth to the inhabitants are cattle; thus a more than usually dry season may reduce the farmer of comparative opulence to the verge of beggary.

By the Vaal, Marico, Notawaney, and Limpopo rivers, where water could be raised by machinery for the purpose of irrigation, splendid crops of millet, Indian corn, sugar, cotton, with nearly every variety of fruit, could be raised; tobacco also, if properly cultivated, might be made one of the staples of the country. Near the Vaal river I took the opportunity of examining a field which was in an advanced stage—the growth was very strong, and the colour denoted that the plants were in robust health; but, instead of being topped, so as to make the leaf large and reduce the quantity of fibre, it was permitted to grow to any height, and carry any quantity of leaves. Now, if this had been in America, in Kentucky or Virginia, not a single plant would have been permitted to bear over five or six leaves.

Although the Kaffir population is abundant, labour is very difficult to obtain in this distant part of the earth. Herding cattle, and such-like occupations, they do not object to, but tillage—in fact, manual labour of any kind—is very much opposed to their ideas of independence and manhood. Thus it is that the women about Kaffir kraals do all the cultivation of the soil. On this account, to a very great extent, may be attributed the opposition the native population offer to all attempts made by the missionaries to put a stop to polygamy, the number of a man's wives being exactly the estimate that may be formed whether he is poor or has an abundance.

On our road, for we are now on the highway from

the Diamond-fields to the interior, we overtook a great many aborigines of different nationalities returning to their homes. While traversing the country of the Boers these poor creatures do not feel particularly safe ; for there is a law in existence in the Transvaal, by which a native who cannot give a satisfactory account of himself may be seized, brought before the Llandroost, and fined or compelled to work, as the worthy magistrate may deem best. Thus several attached themselves to me, giving their services in return for food and protection. From this cause I obtained a fine stalwart handsome Macalaca for foreloper.

However, I soon found that he was not suited to the work ; for he had purchased a gun at "the Fields," which was so dear to him that he could not lay it aside, and, believing in the old saying, "Loaded or not she's dangerous," I put him to another task, namely, that of "herd" and assistant-hunter, while a more disreputable-looking member of his tribe was installed as foreloper.

This Macalaca race are a strange people. They are generally tall, well-formed, and yet they are reported to be consummate thieves, fearful cowards, and skilful workers in iron. If you ask a native who happens to possess either an assegai or hoe, "Who made that?" the answer invariably is, "Macalaca." They are now vassals of the Matabele, who ride over them with a rough-shod foot, getting from them one year the very weapons with which they murder them the next. Their pilfering qualities I scarcely expected to be put in operation, for they were too much in my power to run such risks ; and Master Umganey, whose duties kept him always with the wagon, aware of the weakness of these heroes, never ceased to watch their movements most sedulously.

From the road, during the latter part of the treck, I shot two spring-bucks and one bless-buck, welcome additions to our larder, especially as there were so many tramps on the road, all of whom, by common consent, expect the Englishman to supply their wants. Willingly they come and cluster round me, and ask me for food, but a Boer they would not think of going near. The reason of this may be that at the Diamond-fields they have become familiarised with our race, and found them generous, while their experiences of the Dutch have taught them the reverse. Then among the Boers that curse—slavery—exists, and naturally those who practise it must be viewed with anything but loving eyes by those who are the sufferers.

At this farm, where we outspanned, the people appeared a tolerably good sort; they sent me a present of milk and green corn, both most acceptable, and I was able to purchase from them about fifty pounds of beltong (generally antelope flesh rubbed with salt and dried in the sun), to which I had become very partial. The beltong was brought to the wagon by an aged *frow*, very stout, and almost swarthy enough to be taken for a native; but she had a kindly eye, and a happy, good-tempered expression of countenance.

As attendants following her were three tame spring-bucks, evidence that these graceful creatures knew her through her kindness; and however I dislike a person, hate their character, despise their meanness, if I am aware or see an evidence in them of affection to animals, I know that they are not all bad, that there is some redeeming quality about them. Very much to my annoyance, Bonte and Bob, followed by the whole pack, jumped off in pursuit. I called, whistled, and

even yelled at them, but all was of no avail; the spring-bucks bounded away gloriously, and the dogs did their best to overtake them.

I told Umganey to bring the horse to prevent mischief being done, but Jacob, who had been conversing with the old lady, assured me that there was no necessity for that: they were hunted by the dogs of every wagon that passed; that if they took a run out on the velt now, they would find their way back at milking-time.

I do not know an animal that makes a more graceful, attractive pet than a spring-buck: they appear capable of great attachment, and are well able to discriminate who are their friends. Mrs. Leask of Klerksdorp had one; it played with the children, bullied the dogs, and walked about the village as if conscious that it was as worthy a member of the community as any one in it, as I daresay it was. In the morning it was in the habit of crossing the river and going out on the velt to feed, where it would associate with the wild ones, still never failed to return at night. It ate almost anything of a vegetable character, from bread to fruit, and was particularly fond of sugar. Strange dogs would occasionally chase it, but its speed was so great that it soon distanced them. Like many pets, the poor thing came to grief. It returned one day from its wanderings with a broken leg: efforts were made to set it, but all that could be done by a kind master was of no avail, and after a lingering illness it had to be destroyed.

The same estimable lady had a pair of crowned cranes (called by the Boers *mahems*), which are equally deserving of notice as pets. They were so tame that

they permitted themselves to be caught, although they were in the habit of flying miles from home to feed on the velt. Although constantly in the society of wild ones, they never manifested the slightest intention of a desire permanently to join them. At night they used to roost on the chimneys, and if a change of weather were about to take place, inform the inhabitants of the village of the circumstance by loud and discordant screams. In all disputes among the poultry, whether turkeys, geese, or fowls, they constituted themselves arbiters, and woe betide the bird that did not listen to their decision. I am of the impression that they were not always just, for if an unfortunate goose happened to be the offender, it would be pursued for a hundred yards, and well pecked during its flight. If ordinary domestic fowls had high words which led to a battle, a mahem would simply walk between them, give first one and then another a stroke with its wing, and erecting itself look down on both belligerents with so extremely comical an expression of countenance, that the observer might well imagine it saying, or at least thinking, "What a pair of fools you are!" These birds were immensely popular with all the children; they were never rough or attempted to peck them. Still I believe that they were not without weaknesses, one of which was cupboard love, for the youngster that had a piece of bread and butter invariably received more attention than those who had none. For hours I have watched these birds, and they never failed to afford me amusement, if not instruction.

However, it is half-past three, and time to renew my journey, or else Marico will take me longer to reach than anticipated. My team may not be all that I

desire, for with experience I am becoming fastidious ; still they are very much better than formerly : this may partially be attributed to Jacob's driving, for he is, without doubt, the best wagoner I have yet had in my employment, and spares the whip although he does not spoil the children. As he walks along by the cattle's side, or sits upon the box, he keeps up a constant conversation with them after this way : " Swartland, leave that grass alone ; I will take your bell away and put you in a centre yoke. Ah ha ! Buffle, what are you after ! " and crack goes the whip. " Poonah, naughty boy ! come, step out ; yes, that's the way, Gilbert ; Master Ackerman, you want to get the wagon in that hole ! where's my jambock ? " and so we progress, slowly truly, but pleasantly enough.

While Morris was with me I had paid comparatively little attention to the oxen ; in truth I had no liking for them ; but now that I am alone and without companionship, I have busied myself among them, always seeing them unyoked and put into harness, if such an expression can be used, and intimate association has really taught me to love them. At first, if I went about their heels, I was certain to be kicked ; now they do not trouble themselves to molest me. Buffle and Swartland, my leaders, are two most intelligent beasts of pure Zulu lineage, possessed of beautiful limbs, small prick ears, smooth coats, and large, clear, expressive eyes. A piece of rusk, or a handful of mealies, does not cost much, so I often have one or other in my pocket for the well-behaved. The consequence is that if I walk in front of the team when trecking—and we are now nearly able to dispense with the foreloper—they will quicken their pace to keep up

with me. Even Poonah, ever in mischief as heretofore, and none the less frisky than formerly, will permit me to scratch his forehead and flank. Morris's almost last wish was that a lion would jump him; that event shall not take place if I can help it.

Oxen are wondrous wise beasts—very much more so than a casual observer would give them credit for; that they can speak to one another, or, at least, have means of communicating their thoughts to each other, I have no doubt. Watch them when unyoked, and listen to the lowing that takes place, or the guttural, suppressed noises they utter, the one waiting for his companions till all are untied, when the appointed leader takes the front and all follow after. The rogue and most unmanageable in my team is Ackerman; in appearance he is the most docile of the docile—grave and staid as becomes his age; but only let him get a chance to run the wagon into a hole and he is certain to do it, or if the herd-boy should be out of sight, and a mealy garden within view, with a couple of wheezy bellows, meaning “Come along, boys,” he makes off for a foray upon the tempting grain.

The nature of the velt is become quite altered, for every here and there are patches of timber, mixed with bush, to the extent frequently of several acres; also slightly elevated ridges crop up, covered with loose and very much decayed sandstone, while between the detached blocks creepers of unknown length twine, covered with the most punishing thorns. In these little covers the stein-buck and diker-buck find a shelter, and if the wanderer had with him well-bred greyhounds he might enjoy splendid coursing.

As numerous wildebeest grazed within easy distance, I took my Martini-Henry and endeavoured to get within

shot, but for a long time these strange animals—resembling more a cross between the horse and the buffalo than anything else—refused to gratify me. At length I spied a bull not far from some bushes. Without attracting attention I gained the friendly shelter and carefully passed through it. The moment I came in sight of the quarry away it bounded, kicking and prancing like a colt just turned loose, while every few steps it turned its head to the right or left to observe whether I was in pursuit. I brought my rifle to my shoulder and watched for what appeared a shadow caused by this evolution; in a moment it showed itself, and at the same instant I pressed the trigger, when the poor beast turned over as complete a somersault as ever did rabbit or hare. The Martini-Henry is certainly a wonderful killer if held straight.

Like the vulture that sees the carrion afar, so I believe the Kaffirs do; before the game was blooded and paunched I had at least a dozen volunteers to transport it to the wagon. Of course for such service each expects to be permitted to assist at the feast.

The ant-hills, I notice, are commencing to change their character; in the Free State they were little larger than exaggerated mole-hills, now they are quite a structure of eight or nine feet high, frequently with a considerable-sized tree growing out of them. How long and how many of these minute insects it takes to make so large a hillock would be an interesting calculation.

Coran have been very abundant all the afternoon, and so tame that Jacob nearly knocked one over with his whip.

About an hour before outspanning I almost came to grief, and after a manner that would be of all others the most distasteful. It was in this way.

The dogs were running about in some tall grass and dwarf bushes. I suspected that a coran was squatted in the vicinity, and they were endeavouring to flush it. I had a few minutes before had the pony saddled, with the intention of riding forward to examine a ford that Jacob reported as very bad, and, if so, to seek out an easier place for crossing. To encourage the pack's enthusiasm in hunting, I rode into their midst. In an instant a snake reared its head up between three and four feet from the ground and struck at my foot; but the pony, as much alarmed as myself, was so quick that he was round on his heels and out of danger in a moment. How the dogs did not get bitten I could not understand, for they stood pottering round the reptile, while every moment or two it made a dive at one or other. Till I was nearly black in the face I shouted *Feusach!* (the Kaffir for "Get out"), still the beasts would not come away. I next endeavoured to take sight on it off the pony's back, but my nag would not stand still, so I dismounted. But what between the rapidity of the snake's motion, and the dogs always getting in the way, I could not get a sufficiently accurate aim to use my rifle with certainty. I now shouted for Jacob, who rushed up with his long whip; but the moment he discovered what he been summoned for he bolted as if the Evil One were after him. At length, after all this bungling, the reptile escaped into a hole, from which I could get no one to assist me to dislodge it.

It was, as far as I could judge, about eight feet long, as thick in the middle as the calf of a man's leg and when its ruff was expanded the neck below the head was as broad as my two hands; in fact, it was very much the largest cobra di capello I had ever seen.

CHAPTER XVIII.

AN OBJECTIONABLE HOST—TRAVELLING COMPANIONS.

A Rough and Ready Entertainment—The Pests of the Stock-Farmer—A Sheriff in Pursuit—A Character Fond of Brandy and Snuff—Uninviting Premises—A Sunday Dinner—Dirty Habits—My Host imperturbable—Request for more Drink—A Fair Exchange—A Mongrel—Another Useless Cur—Macguire—Bitten by a Snake—Cured—Worried by the other Dogs—Two Travelling Boers—Description—A Cross-examination—Repository of Secrets—A Chance of Marriage—My Captain's Biscuits become Inhabited—Beware of Microscopical Examinations—Bee-eater—Supposed New Species—Cow and her Calf against Three Hyænas—The Cowardly Assailants Knocked over—Aard-wolf—A Solomon—An Offer to Barter—A Strange Fence—My Companions depart—I arrive at Jacobsdal—Commotion among the Population—A Canny Scot—My Host and his Family—I reach Zeerust—Mr. Niccoti Winkle.

NEXT day we entered Leichtberg, a straggling village of *adobe*, or semi-dried brick houses. Each dwelling had an extensive garden in front of it, running down to the road, and apparently bearing prolific crops of vegetables, chief among which appeared the water-melon and tomato. Passing through, we outspanned on the north side of the village, and ere the coffee was made I was joined by several of the inhabitants, among whom were an Englishman and his son. Spreading my rugs upon the ground, and producing my chairs, I made all as comfortable as I could; and that they were satisfied with the entertainment, which consisted of as much coffee and biscuit as they could drink and eat, with a *petit verre de cognac* after, was apparent in their *bonhomie* manner, so different from what I had

experienced among the Boers before. But these people had one grievance, and that a serious one: the wolves (hyænas) were destroying their cattle wholesale; even the night before they had killed three donkeys, and several goats and sheep. Had I any poison with me, and if so would I sell it? they inquired. Unfortunately I had not, or I should have willingly supplied the drug for the destruction of these pests of the stock-farmer. All the people here appeared well-to-do; our countryman acknowledged that there was no difficulty in earning a living, but he feared it would be a long time before he got rich.

A smart little man on horseback came up; his dress and bearing denoted him a person of position in the community; he possessed a fair smattering of English, and appeared disposed to be very friendly. On inquiry he turned out to be the sheriff of the district of Marico, in pursuit of a defaulter. He expressed a great wish for me to have the saddle put on my horse and accompany him to Zeerust; and much as I should like to have done so, if for no other reason than to gain his friendship, I was obliged to decline, as from past experience I had learned too well how fatal deserting my attendants had always proved.

We trecked that evening and next morning over a most villanous road, and arrived about 9 a.m. (Sunday) at a capital camping-ground, in the middle of which was a large pond, and at the further end of the water two dwellings and several out-houses.

As it is the custom in the Transvaal, I sent Jacob for permission to outspan; soon he returned with the request granted, accompanied by the proprietor.

This man was a character if ever there was one.

He was about five feet nine inches, very powerfully built, with flowing grey hair, whiskers, and beard. He thought he could speak English, but his lingo was a most absurd mixture of Dutch, Kaffir, and English. I treated him to a *souppje* of brandy; this he swallowed at a gulp, winked knowingly with one eye, and rubbed his stomach. He was going to hear the Predicant preach, but would be back at twelve o'clock, when he hoped I would dine with him, but before taking his departure would I give him another *souppje*? In a weak moment I handed him the bottle and glass; the latter he three-quarters filled with the precious fluid—precious I say, for far up country as I am now it was worth five dollars a bottle—winked with both eyes, and uttered a protracted whistle. Still he did not go. Had I any snuff? for he had not enjoyed that luxury for six months, and his mother and his *frow* were fond of snuff. I gave him a couple of ounces; wistfully he gazed at the box that held the remainder, but I was firm, and he retired with his gift, to hear the preacher.

These people make great professions of religion, but I fear hypocrisy is not unknown among them.

While my future host was absent, I took a stroll around the premises; they were anything but clean and inviting, while the quantity of the remains of dead game that strewed the ground in the vicinity of the dwellings clearly showed on what the inhabitants subsisted. Here was the thigh of a zebra, there the head of a wildebeest, with the remains of spring-buck, roy-buck, and bless-buck only half deprived of their flesh, scattered over all the neighbouring soil, while close to the pond there was a perfect cairn of bones and skulls. It is not difficult to predict the rapid extermination of

the game, when in the country there exist such blood-thirsty assassins. Instead of going to hear the Predicant, better far he had communed with himself in his closet, and resolved never again uselessly to destroy the beautiful children of nature, a race bestowed upon us by the Creator to be used, but not abused.

In due course of time the man returned ; he came to me for another glass of brandy, and as I was going to dine with him, how could I refuse it ? At length we reached the house ; a dirty, a fearfully dirty tablecloth covered a shaky nondescript thing that did duty for a table. On it were placed several knives, altered in form, and not unlike what they might be supposed to become if hungry persons bit pieces out of them. In due course of time a dish was placed in front of where the head of the establishment was supposed to sit. We took our places, the cover was removed, and a frightful smell assailed my nostrils.

Could I eat such food ? Well, I am in Africa, far beyond what is acknowledged as a civilised country, and I will try. I succeeded so far as to empty the plate, but this was no use ; the host, as often as I did so, fished out a new dainty with his dirty fingers, and insisted that I should accept it. This was bad enough, but the mother, a most antiquated witch, was in attendance, acting as waitress. In her hands was a clout ; with it she wiped the plates before we sat down to our meal ; afterwards, because it was warm, she relieved herself of the perspiration on her head and neck with this rag, and ultimately collared a dirty child, five or six years of age, and wiped its face with this table-napkin. I could endure it no more, but rushed forth into the open air, and thence to my wagon.

I can stand clean dirt as well as another: this requires an explanation. I do not kick up a disturbance because my chop or steak has fallen in the fire, and has sundry ashes attached to it. I can stand that; but dirty dirt, such as I had just witnessed—upon my word, I think I would sooner go without food altogether! That all Boers are as dirty as this I do not mean to assert, but that many are is an indisputable fact.

My sudden retreat from the dinner-table, any person would have thought the termination of our acquaintance; not so my late host. He soon appeared, and producing a bottle that could hold at least a quart and a half, asked for some brandy, of which the old lady was very fond, and for the want of which she was suffering.

The impudence, the brass of the man, was beyond being amusing; but as I did not want to part bad friends with him, I filled his measure with Natal rum. With this prize he walked off, and I gave orders for the cattle to be put in the yoke forthwith.

The boys obeyed my behest with alacrity, and were doing their best to hasten our departure, when the worthy Boer appeared again, gun in hand. With a happy smile on his countenance—one that the casual observer would believe to denote that he was the most hospitable man in the world, and had not an enemy living—he came up to me. Well, what do you think he wanted but that I should give him one of my beautiful rifles for his antediluvian flint-lock affair! He loved me so much that he insisted on an exchange; it was no use arguing, I must do it. Of course I refused; but the more I did so, the more energetic he became. At last I could stand it no longer, but made my shoe-

maker acquainted with his tailor in such a manner as must have left the impression that my sole leather was well tanned.

At Hartebeestfontein I had a dog given me by the lady who sent me the fruit. It was a mongrel of the first water, a beast that those most skilled in the parentage and lineage of the canine race would look at with awe, and inquire with real concern of the introducer, "You do not, surely, ask me to give an opinion on the pedigree of such a brute?" I have ever held that "like dog like master." Of course, if a man buys a dog, and does not retain him long in his possession, or has only lately become the owner of him, this does not apply. But, for instance, you see that jaunty subaltern walking out of barracks: how proudly he swings his cane; how thoroughly he is satisfied that he is an object on which all eyes are directed! He is a future general—a great man in the caterpillar form, that will devolve into a grand butterfly—in his own estimation, at least! In each soldier's pocket the *bâton* of a marshal is not carried in England—for Englishmen fight without such high inducements. But if that ensign had a dog, he would no more associate with the animals belonging to the rank and file, even when the meat rations were served out in the morning, than he would fly. No; "like master, like dog:" and this lady's animal was so effeminate that the others bullied it, so it took the first chance to run away.

Another inhabitant of Hartebeestfontein—for dogs seemed numerous in this locality—came to me to know if I would buy a dog. His eyes were like those of a ferret; his face appeared as if it were made of putty; while his nose projected in a sharp hatchet shape—in

fact, his head looked as if he had been sat upon. With half-bleached hair, that had once been brown, and a complexion more like the colour of those saucers that actresses wash their stockings in, was this man and his dog. I weighed the matter. A useless cur I knew it must be; still, it might bark, and it might be cunning enough to bite in the dark, and take advantage of opportunities to do injury that the more upright and just would never avail themselves of. So I bought the brute, and called it "Macguire," after one I once knew, and whom it much resembled. Sometimes, for shortness, I called it "Paddy." That was when I was good-tempered; if out of sorts, I always gave the miserable red-haired brute his name in full. Never was there a greater skulker in this world, and yet the wretch makes professions to be as brave as its comrades, and would deceive any but keen observers. I have not mentioned him before, for he was scarcely worth the trouble. Yet to-day he was bitten by a snake. The limb where he was struck swelled enormously, and I concluded that my pack of nondescripts was about to suffer a diminution; however, I applied extract of ammonia to the wound, poured two or three table-spoonfuls down his throat; and I now know that my efforts have saved the cur's life.

Well, poor wretch! his unfortunate appearance is not his fault, but all the other dogs dislike him most terribly, and never lose an opportunity of worrying him; and though one may feel sorry that such is the case, yet one cannot so thoroughly show sympathy when one observes that he attacks all who are weaker than himself, and without the slightest scruple appropriates their food. "Give a dog a bad name," &c. &c.: so in

this instance, for Jacob and Umganey never fail to give him a sly kick when opportunity offers. I wish sincerely I had not become his owner, for I do not like beasts I possess to be abused; so I must try and put a stop to the stray knocks the unfortunate receives on the slightest provocation.

A few miles along the road I was overtaken by two Boers. A greater contrast to each other in appearance than these men it would be difficult to imagine. The principal was a well-made, powerful man of about eight-and-twenty; although stout, he was not fat, and was mounted on one of the finest and best-conditioned horses I had seen in the country; indeed, his horse-gear and his own clothing were of a superior description to what the visitor usually observes in this part of the world. The companion, on the other hand, was a most filthy little wretch, with an enormous shock head of hair; both his legs and feet were much deformed, so much so, that when dismounted he could scarcely walk. His steed was a white donkey, as miserable in appearance as himself. His filthiness he could assuredly remedy, his deformity not; and much as I objected to the former, I could not help pitying him for the other. They drew up, and courteously saluted me, the horseman speaking English well, the cuddyman but indifferently.

As always happens with Boers, they subjected me to a severe cross-examination about my intentions, views, country, relatives, &c. In return I followed their example, and found them wonderfully communicative. The young man acknowledged without hesitation that he had been on a courting expedition, that he was not likely to be long single now, and that his friend accompanied him to talk to the parents while he paid his

addresses to the lady of his choice. From what I could make out, the deformed man was a person of no small importance in the community; the possessor of all family secrets that existed in the neighbourhood; was acquainted with all the eligible young ladies far and wide; and could tell to a stiver how much money and how many head of cattle each would receive as dowry on the day she committed matrimony. Further, he undertook the duty of envoy in such delicate affairs with unparalleled success; and his services were in much request by the beaux of the country.

Voluntarily he informed me that, although as a rule Boer men did not like Englishmen, Boer women did; and that he could find a wife for me, and that without much delay, if I resolved to remain in the country. In fact, he knew at that moment a young lady, very pretty, very fascinating, very rich, and (making a motion with his arms so as to infer that to clasp her round the waist would be an impossibility) so big.

Expressing a doubt of the propriety of getting married, he had an answer ready. There was no hurry—oh, not the least! but when I had been in Zeerust a few days I would change my mind, particularly if I attended preaching next Sunday, where I would see the charmer.

My new acquaintances seemed pleased with my company, so made no effort to leave me behind; thus, when it got time to outspan, I asked them to accept my hospitality. This they at once consented to, and so, as I had an abundance of game, coffee, and other good things, the supper passed off most pleasantly—if I except a playful mannerism the deformed man had of placing his fingers in the soup in search of tit-bits, and then wiping them by shoving them in his mouth, from

whence they were withdrawn with a loud sonorous smack.

Tobacco I had in abundance, so after each had eaten to his heart's content, my pouch was produced, and conversation became general.

There is no delicacy in Boer men or women. No subject seems too gross to be tabooed their conversation, even when the different sexes are together, or strangers present; yet they are unquestionably a most virtuous people—a proof that the greatest scold in Billingsgate may be a very dragon of propriety.

When our convivial meeting broke up, they turned in under the wagon, with apparently as much satisfaction as if they were about to occupy the most luxurious chamber.

Before sunrise Umganey had prepared a capital breakfast—roast venison, the stew of last night, with some curry-powder introduced into it, and as much coffee, rusk, and biscuit as we could consume.

Touching those biscuits, they were excellent for a long time, but suddenly there has appeared a most extraordinary creature in them that I never previously beheld. It is not a weevil, but its duties in life seem to be somewhat similar to those of that insect. The biscuits I allude to are square, their surface dotted over with little holes, and are called captain's biscuits. In every one of these holes appears to be lodged a dark brown monster; under a strong microscope the vermin looks like an alligator, has four legs and a tail. These biscuits I don't eat with the same pleasure as formerly, and I'd advise you never to use a microscope to inspect your food. However scientific you are, such a course is a mistake, I assure you.

When I eat them now I soak them in my coffee as hot as it can be produced, then rapidly afterwards skim the surface—the less time lost in performing the latter operation the better, as they are apt to get boiled down, and thus act as thickening to the beverage.

Leaving my new acquaintances, who propose journeying on with the wagon, accompanied by three of the dogs, I struck out on the velt and reached several coppies and ridges of rocks, all of which were more or less covered with trees. The scenery and characteristics of the features of the country are more thoroughly, every mile we progress, undergoing a marked change, while a distant range of hills, eighteen hundred to two thousand feet high, shuts out the horizon to the north.

In a valley formed by this ridge is Zeerust, and to the right, about ten miles distant, is Jacobsdal, both being in the province of Marico. The population of neither of these places is above fifty or sixty souls, and they are the last pretence at civilisation to be found.

While passing along the margin of a clear purling brook, that would have done honour to even bonnie Herefordshire, I came across a new species of bee-eater (*apiaster*), possessed of the most gorgeous plumage. Substituting small shot for ball, I succeeded, after a great deal of trouble and stalking, in getting a shot. In Smith's "Birds of South Africa" it is not mentioned, nor have I seen it before; even at the large Ornithological Museum at Cape Town it is not represented. Therefore I naturally conclude it to be a new species, and feel not a little proud at the possibility of introducing to science a specimen of animal life that has hitherto been unknown. The predominant colour is a

deep plum-red, with very long forked tail, the bird itself being slightly larger in size than the turtle-dove. If I should live to return, I hope it will grace some day a case of rare specimens from various other distant climes that I wot of.

Crossing a ridge of loose stone I came upon an unexpected scene, a cow battling with three hyænas for the life of her calf. The little one was between her legs, and yet with the greatest adroitness she faced wherever the point of danger appeared most imminent; but the odds were all in favour of the assailants, and in spite of her strong maternal affection it was only a matter of time for her to be deprived of the defenceless progeny she loved so well, unless assistance came to her aid.

Springing off the back of my horse, for I was within forty yards of the combatants, I knocked over one of the marauders with each barrel, and after a short but sharp bout, Bob and Bonte had pinned the other, to whom a bullet was given as a *quietus*. These were all of the common striped species, formidable only to very young, or sick and worn-out-by-age animals.

There is a very pretty little hyæna to be found up in these localities, called by the natives "aard-wolf," and by the colonists "strand wolf;" it is about the size of a jackal, possesses a bright fawn-coloured coat, handsomely marked with black lines. Although so small, they do great damage to sheep and goats, and at times, assembling together to the number of a dozen, will not then scruple to attack an ox. This animal must not be confused with the aard-vark, which is an ant-eater.

Returning to the wagon at noon I found dinner prepared, and my acquaintances of last night anxiously looking forward to my arrival as necessary before they

commenced to whet their appetites. These people are both most amusing. The elder showed his knowledge of the human character by the following observation, "If you want to court a lass, aye make the mother believe that if she were single you would prefer her to the daughter." Wise man this! The younger of the two is brim-full of hunting anecdotes, as he has annually made a trip into the elephant country since he was a lad. He has confided in me—and the other thinks it a good joke—how he has promised to give up that pursuit after he has married. A great sacrifice; but what must he not do if his *frow* desire it?

The owner of the white donkey here adds, "Next year, or the year after, you will be at it again; your love-making will be over then, and the wife will be glad to get rid of you for a while. Yes, it's the same with the whole of you; you'll all promise anything before you're married, and do as you like after." There's some truth in this, I believe.

The young elephant-hunter had taken a great fancy to one of my double eight-bore guns, and was anxious to make a trade with me; the gun and twenty pounds for his horse, saulted and warranted a first-class hunter. I was not then sufficiently conversant with the merits of saulted horses, or I should have accepted the offer. The value of this nag could not have been less than one hundred pounds, and many a time afterwards I regretted letting the opportunity slip of becoming its possessor.

Next morning we trecked past a fine farm, abundantly supplied with water, and possessed of a large quantity of land under cultivation. The homestead stood in the centre of an extensive orchard, the greater number of the fruit-trees being orange; the

fence around this inclosure was a tall thick hedge of quince, now covered with fine fruit. Previously I had never seen this member of the vegetable kingdom devoted to such a purpose. On the high ground in front of the house, on the unenclosed velt, pastured a large drove of splendid cattle, all as fat and sleek as the most fastidious stockholder could desire. The owner came out to see who the traveller was; for it is not an every-day occurrence here to have a wagon pass, so I laid hold of the chance to try and trade away some of my tired and travel-stained beasts for fresh ones; but the boot he asked was so preposterous that I could only laugh at the man's impudence or his appreciation of my sanity.

My new friends here left me. The Knight of La Mancha and his attendant they looked like, as they rode off to the eastward over the undulating velt.

Mounting the Basuto pony, I rode on, ordering the driver, Jacob, to make the best of his way to Zeerust. The road was very pretty, passing between the spurs of two hills, well wooded, and the valley abundantly supplied with water. Soon I passed two more farms, adjoining each other, and much superior in every respect to the last I have described. The trek now turned to the east; in the distance, under some high hills, Zeerust could be seen, about ten miles off, while Jacobsdal was close at hand—a straggling village of twenty or more houses on each side of the road, along the edge of which a stream flowed, while large orchards were conspicuous for half a mile deep on the left side of its bank.

The appearance of the solitary horseman in their midst made quite a commotion—women rushed to doors and windows, children out into the street to see the

unlooked-for apparition. I sought what appeared the most respectable store for my dismounting-place ; but, before I had removed my off foot from the stirrup, I was made captive by a true specimen of the race north of the Tweed, who would listen to no argument or excuse, but insisted that I should become his guest. At dinner all the delicacies the "gudeman" had in his shop were produced, among which were wine from Constantia, Boer brandy, ten years of age, from the Old Colony, and whisky that claimed Scotland for its birth-place. How my host's eyes dilated when I told him that I had fished and shot in his native land last autumn, and when I said I knew Bothwell-on-the-Clyde the climax was reached.

His wife, a kind motherly woman, and three ruddy well-grown children I was introduced to, the latter staring at me with awe when they learned that I had crossed the big ocean, and came from papa's land. One little four-year-old, in rather timid accents, asked whether "him would not always stay with them," and when answered in the negative it pouted its pretty little lips, and seemed quite sad. A bed was offered me, but declined, as I make it a rule not to sleep from the wagon. So at half-past four I was again in the saddle, and, after a pleasant ride of an hour, over a fair road—the distance being about nine miles—I cantered into Zeerust, similar in size and many other respects to Jacobsdal.

Here, as before, I looked out for the best store ; at length I decided on what appeared the cleanest and most promising, which bore the inscription—"Niccoti Winkle." It certainly looked a strange name ; but then I was in a strange land.

I rode towards it ; there was a group of four or five

Europeans and several Boers on its porch. Taking off my cap, I asked for Mr. Niccoti Winkle. A roar of laughter greeted my inquiry. After the mirth had somewhat subsided, a good-looking, well-dressed gentleman approached me. "Niccoti Winkle is the Boer for store, and I am the proprietor of the establishment. Please dismount and make yourself at home; your wagon is outspanned in my yard."

I afterwards learned that the name of Niccoti Winkle has stuck to my kind host ever since this incident.

CHAPTER XIX.

A BRIEF SOJOURN AMONG BOERS.

Jacob's Engagement at an End—My Late Driver "Sprung"—Sale of my Oxen—I procure some Pets—Assumed Indignation at Kama—Boers' Cruelty in the Hunt—Abuse of Kama's Permission—A Visit to Moiloes—Its Chief or King—Prosperity—Mr. Jansen, the Missionary—His Untiring Zeal—The British Subjects at Zeerust—Their Boer Wives—The Gothic Episcopalian Church—Associations of the Village Church—A Hunter's Wagon—Trying to Dissuade me—Jealousy of the Boers—Its Cause—An Attempt at Extortion—It Fails—Adieu to Zeerust.

WITH my arrival at Zeerust Jacob's engagement terminates, very much to my sorrow; for he has proved himself an excellent servant and capital driver—in fact, I had never seen any one get so much out of cattle, and use the whip so little. Before paying him, he wished me to let him go on to the elephant country; but, as he was only lent by Mr. Leask, and had a wife and bairns at Klerksdorp, I declined, although nothing would have been more satisfactory to myself. Besides, to have acceded to his wishes would have been the height of ingratitude to my kind friend.

I thought Jacob had taken his departure when I met him in the village, decidedly the worse for what he had been imbibing. An hour after he came to me very intoxicated, and asked for a glass of spirits, which, of course, he did not receive. I asked him why he did not go home. Oh, he had spent all his money, or gambled it away, so I gave him half-a-sovereign, and saw him

on the road to Jacobsdal. This is a fair specimen of the improvidence of many of these people who possess Hottentot blood.

I found it a difficult matter to obtain a suitable driver, although many applied for the situation; so I sent to Jacobsdal and the neighbouring farms to make public my requirement.

In the meantime, I held a board on my oxen; four of them I determined to part with, for they had indicated a tendency to footsoreness, and had become very thin. As they were young and well-bred, I found no difficulty in effecting an exchange for a similar number of powerful animals, but the strangers were such clumsy coarse brutes that they entirely destroyed the symmetry of my team.

As I was alone, and not likely now to meet travellers, to break the monotony of my halts, I also procured as pets a goat, monkey, and cat. The first had to be driven for two or three days, the others took to their new life at once. Pussy became a great favourite—slept in my bed, kept Jacko in order, and, in fact, had a voice in all matters that were going on. She became a firm ally of the dogs, and always with them attended my meals. Some poultry were also obtained, but they, poor things, were intended for the pot.

I soon knew all the people in Zeerust. Mr. Reed, owner of the Niccoti Winkle, invited me to take my meals with him, consequently I met all visitors, and was introduced to the wealth, beauty, and fashion of the community. The great subject of conversation, also of indignation, that excited the minds of this distant village, was the conduct of Kama, king of the Bechuanas, who had refused to permit any Boers to hunt in his

country, or traverse it to reach the game haunts beyond. Such insolence was never heard of in a Kaffir before; they would fight their way in and burn down Soshong if necessary. But this was all braggadocio; they knew better than attempt to coerce Kama, for past experiences had taught them that he was not a man to be trifled with.

The decision of the Bechuana king was not to be wondered at, when it is a well-known fact that the Boers had enslaved, and even at the present time held in bondage, numbers of his subjects. Again, another reason is that the Boers spare no game they meet with, cow elephants or tuskless elephants are all the same to them, and are destroyed in countless numbers even when no use can be made of their flesh.

A countryman here narrated a circumstance that all right-minded persons would think a disgrace to the perpetrators. Kama granted permission to three Boers to hunt for ivory in one of his very best velts; after having obtained a rich harvest, the elephants betook themselves to the fly (*tsetse*) country, where their persecutors dared not follow, on account of their horses. However, not satisfied with the reward they had received, they turned to and killed seven hundred buffaloes for the sake of their skins. The whole plain actually reeked with carnage. When Kama heard of this he went to them, and asked how they dared kill his cattle. Were they not the food of his children when the heavens refused to give rain? and forthwith he drove them out.

Unjustifiable acts such as these can have no excuse, nor can the Boers expect to be otherwise treated when they commit them than to be forbidden to visit the

scenes of their misdemeanors. But as Zeerust derives its chief support from the ivory and ostrich-feather trade, it is a serious matter for the mercantile community.

With the hope of obtaining a driver, I rode over to Mr. Jansen's, the missionary at Moiloes, a large Kaffir town, situated on the spring that is the source of the Notawaney. The population must be between twenty and thirty thousand. The huts, which are most regularly laid out, were remarkably clean, and the population comfortable and well-to-do. The chief or king I met, a very good-looking man of five or six-and-thirty, dressed in European clothes, and speaking a little English.

It is quite evident he does not love the Dutch, and would gladly transfer his suzerainship to England. He regretted that he had no hunting lands now, or how glad he would have been to accompany me, but he would send and tell Kama and Sechelle to be good to me.

There is a great deal of cultivation in this neighbourhood, Indian corn and Kaffir corn (*holcus sorgus*) growing for miles along the approach to the town. I also visited the church and school—a clean, tidy building in the most populous part of the community.

And I would now ask to whom all this apparent and substantial prosperity is due? To Mr. Jansen, the good missionary. He is the first of what I may designate the real missionaries—those who have *bonâ fide* established themselves among the heathen—and he is a good example of those noble self-denying men that I shall have afterwards to speak of. Mr. Jansen is a Dane by birth, and by profession a sailor. Nearly thirty years ago he came here, and has made Moiloes

what it is. For many years he had fearful uphill work, for the Boers threw every obstacle in his way; but his resolution and faith never failed him, and now he is reaping his reward. Still, thirty years have not obliterated the characteristics of the sailor. On the quarter-deck—with speaking-trumpet under his arm—you could well believe that he was thoroughly in his place; a bad-weather sailor, not one that has never known otherwise than to cruise in sunny seas.

His house is very pretty, and fronted by a wide veranda, flanked on either side by substantial offices. Facing it is a grove of blue gum-trees, now sixty or more feet high; while in rear of his residence is a beautiful garden and fine orchard. Irrigation he has taught the inhabitants, and to irrigation is due his success as an agriculturist. The hospitality of Mr. Jansen is well known to the very few white men who penetrate so far; to me he extended it, and so excellent was everything that I really commenced to think I was in an English farm-house instead of a heathen land. When I bid him good-bye, the church-bell was ringing to summon the faithful to worship; and so large was the congregation that many a clergyman at home is without its equal numerically.

The four or five British subjects who reside at Zeerust have all married Boer wives; in the selections they have made they have shown such good taste, that I am really surprised to learn that such comely matrons are to be found of this race. We know that women, much more easily than men, adapt themselves to elevation in their social position of life, and an instance of it is here met with, for these ladies are as tidy, clean, and natty as their sisters in the old country. An

amusing circumstance arising out of these marriages is said lately to have occurred here. The truth of it was vouched for, and believing it myself, I retail it.

An aspiring young politician, who possessed the "gift of the gab" in much greater proportion than common sense, had at one time been a suitor for the hand of one of the ladies in question; for a long time his suit progressed favourably, when in an unlucky moment one of these Englishmen arrived. He, in course of time, was introduced to the fair one, wooed and won her. The disappointed lover was irate; but how could he show his indignation? By rising at the first meeting of the guardians of the community, and proposing the introduction of a law to forbid Boer women marrying Englishmen! One older than he added an addendum to it—that before it became law it should be submitted to the female portion of the inhabitants. It is unnecessary to add that it did not gain their approval.

Behind where I am outspanned is a humble, unpretending little Episcopalian church, of Gothic architecture, no doubt the nearest to the heart of Africa that exists. Is there any man living who has not experienced a feeling of betterness on entering a place of worship or a graveyard? The wild, most froward, and reckless have all their better moments, and few places are so likely to produce them. Childhood, that period of our existence without care or sorrow, when parents, relatives, and friends surround us, is always associated with the village church. Years may pass by, we may go through foreign lands, sickness, and trial; but the village church, its quiet green, the sheltering trees, are never forgotten; memory will glide back to it and its associations some-

times by day, but more frequently in our dreams at night; and when man is about to be summoned to his last parade, and before the spirit leaves its earthly home, I have no doubt that even then he will think of the village church, associated with the dear ones of his youth.

I would not have been deprived of paying a visit to this unpretending edifice for anything, but it must be done alone; for there are actions in our life that we would prefer human eye not to witness. At the porch, humble in spirit, I took off my cap and entered. There was the same solemnity, the same rest, the same peace so familiar at home. No living creature was to be seen except two beautiful birds, about the size of doves, that had built their nest among the rafters, fitting tenants for so pure and sacred an abode. I knelt by the altar and asked for myself a blessing; when I rose to go forth I inwardly knew that the watchful guardianship of the Almighty was over this church, although it was truly in the uttermost parts of the earth. I afterwards made the acquaintance of Mr. Carter, the clergyman, who showed me much attention and kindness. That his heart is in his work is abundantly proved by the comparative life of exile this good man is leading.

An explorer's or hunter's wagon is always a favourite lounging-place for those who have spare time on their hands: thus I have constantly a *levée* of Boers around me. One wants to buy a gun, another ammunition or drugs. They will not listen to my explanation that I am not a trader—all men are traders in their eyes. Thus you are pestered till you get cross, and then they get cross, when they invariably tell me the same story,

“Better turn back, Kama won’t let you into the elephant country more than us, and you don’t know what a hard time you will have before getting to Bamanwatto.” Then another will add, “It will take you eighteen days to do it, and there is no water between Crocodile River and Soshong.”

Never mind, we shall see what we shall see; but turn back I will not, till I interview Kama; and if I am not much mistaken in what I have heard of his character, he will not only grant me permission to go on, but give me some of his people as guides.

The fact is, the Boers are jealous, and, had they the power, would stop every one from passing here. The ivory and feathers of the whole interior they consider theirs by right, and oppose all persons who may possibly obtain a share in this trade. Again, they particularly object to Englishmen entering far Kaffir-land, for they are certain to hear of their slave-hunting propensities, the numerous brutal outrages they have committed on the inoffensive native population, as well as the way they have swindled every one, from king to peasant, of grain, carosses, and other productions of this distant sun-dried land. Moreover, Englishmen have a way of speaking out their minds and calling a spade a spade, and travelling away down into the Old Colony, and communicating with newspapers and persons of standing there. And as public feeling at present exists, the Boers are not altogether popular with the colonial government, and they know it. And who can be certain but that these hated Englishmen might not take it in their heads to annex them and release all their folks (slaves)? Who knows, indeed, if they let so many people go up North, that when they come back again they will not talk about

what they have heard and seen? No, the Boers would close all distant Kaffir-land to the world; but a hundred well-armed Englishmen could open the gate in spite of the whole population, if it were assembled to oppose them.

At length all was ready for starting, the oxen were in the yoke and myself mounted, when up came a party of Boers, and demanded five pounds' duty on my wagon, a tax levied on all traders. They showed no authority for their conduct, and refused me all information but this, that if I did not pay there and then they would seize my wagon. That I was resolved they should not do, and affairs were commencing to get exciting and lively, when a friend came to the rescue. To my assailants he pointed out that the tax was only levyable upon merchandise going through the Transvaal for the purpose of trade, that I had nothing in my load but necessaries for the subsistence of myself and attendants, and therefore was not liable. To this they would not listen, and I as obstinately refused to satisfy their extortionate demand. At length they attempted to remove a valuable gun-case from the wagon as security for their unjust demand. My patience was too severely taxed to submit any longer, so I jumped off my horse, armed myself with my revolver, and rushed in among them. The gun-case was dropped like a hot coal, and the scoundrels bolted as fast as their legs could carry them.

The order to treck was given, and thus I bid adieu to Zeerust.

CHAPTER XX.

PIG-STICKING IN SOUTH AFRICA.

More Natives under my Wing—My New Driver—His Likes and his Dislikes—Another One Wanted—"Count" or "Uncle"—A Pair of Black Oxen Purchased—The Men in Possession—Humiliating Return—Scrimmage with a Dirty Boer—Sheriff to the Rescue—Verdict in My Favour—South African Scenery—Umganey in Gorgeous Array—Immense Effect upon his Friends—Is the Man Mad, or does he mean Suicide?—Umganey's Explanation makes Darkness Visible—Game, that's it—Pigs!—Fetch my Spear—Attendant and Self off for the Chase—I cannot get near the Quarry—The Quarry gets near the Macalaca—In fact, throws him—"Revenge!" I cry—Pig receives *One Prod* and I receive *One Coup*—Ingenuity of the Macalaca—Pork not so Scarce as it was an Hour Ago—Chase after Jackal—Silver Jackal—The Voice of the Jackal—Queer Ant-heaps—Umganey explains their Chimney-shaped Funnels—In a Strange Land—Another Addition to my Museum.

WELL, you all know how I marched out of Zeerust—not exactly with colours flying and the band playing the old, old but never stale air, "The Girl I left behind me," still feeling quite jaunty and not a little proud of the way I had defeated the enemy.

Trecking five miles, I halted by the last water to be found for fifty miles—two days and a half's work. Here a good deal of organising was required; the new bullocks were evidently not in their places, and a nigh-ox does not work well as an off-one, and *vice versa*. Moreover, the fatches had to be filled, and a man told off to look after Buckey, the goat.

While here I was joined by several Macalacas and Mashoonas, all on their way home from the Diamond-fields, where they had been at work. For protection

and food they were anxious to join me, in return giving me their services. The representatives of the former tribe were fine, tall, slim, well-made men, such as would make the material of a splendid light company; while the latter were thick-set, rather short, but exceedingly powerful in build.

Their experience of the Anglo-Saxon race at the Diggings seemed to have impressed them favourably, for the driver gratuitously informed me that they had told him that they knew the difference between Boer man and Englishman. It is pleasant to know that my countrymen in this far-away land keep up their reputation for manliness and honest dealing.

I had now a dozen mouths to feed, so that I should have to hunt more—a circumstance that gave me no little satisfaction, for it occupied my mind, and prevented me from brooding; for it is unnecessary to disguise the fact that I suffered much from loneliness, and would do so still more when I got beyond the limits—to which I was rapidly approaching—of where white men lived. Between myself and the Boers there was little sympathy, I acknowledge; but still, there was a tie which did not exist with the black population—namely, they were of the same colour as myself. How fragile is the straw that the drowning man catches at! Almost as fragile was the bond that bound me to the Boer, still it existed.

As the reader should know all the *dramatis personæ* of my travel, I will introduce him to my new driver. He is of Hottentot extraction, and from the Old Colony; about forty years of age, and stands five feet six. Instead of being black, he is of a sickly yellow colour, his head covered with innumerable little pimples

of hair; a nose that looks as if the bridge had been broken in during his childhood; legs that are so bowed that any of my pack might pass between them without destroying his equilibrium; while feet and hands that looked as if they had been made for a giant ornamented his extremities. In spite of all these peculiarities, he was inordinately vain, wore a bunch of dazzling-coloured ribbons in his hat, a neck-tie of gigantic size, pattern, and brilliancy, and walked as if he were "the glass of fashion, the mould of form, the observed of all observers," spoke as if his word were law, and treated all the community with an air of *hauteur* that was truly grand.

I came in for some of this—a good deal of it, in fact, and more than I liked. It was evident he argued with himself thus: "This man knows nothing: it is extremely doubtful whether he could tell with certainty an ox from a horse; and as to driving cattle and managing a wagon, he is as ignorant as the child unborn." Now, I just knew sufficient of these matters to think I knew a great deal, and by no means liked the estimate placed on my knowledge. I am not guiltless of the frailties of the human family—very, very far from it; and among my numerous weaknesses is, possibly, the overrating of my abilities, certainly not the undervaluing of them.

My new driver found fault with everything: nothing was right; the leading cattle should be the after ones, the after ones the leaders; Poonah was no use, and good old Swartland was a bad ox; Umganey was a duffer, and the monkey—which had bitten him because he had teased it—was to be knocked on the head. Well, we will see, thought I, when you get a few

trecks from Zeerust; you are too near home, my fine fellow, to have any trouble with you now. Such was Philip—such was my latest acquisition in the driving line.

Master Philip came to me with the information that another ox must be purchased, that a spare one was absolutely necessary, and that without such an adjunct we never could expect to reach Bamanwatto. His arguments were worth listening to—namely, that a lion might jump an ox, that lung-sickness might break out, and some of the cattle get footsore. There was truth in all this, so, resolved not to baulk any movement that might assist to make my journey successful, I ordered the horse to be saddled, and rode off to a farmhouse a few miles distant to see if I could obtain what was required.

Here I found a young Africander and his friend at dinner, to which I received a cordial invitation. During the meal I stated the cause of my visit, and the friend most obligingly offered to accommodate me. This gentleman was a Swede, and dressed in the most extraordinary *outré* fashion, all the colours of the rainbow predominating in his attire, while massive jewellery decorated his fingers and vest. By familiar friends he was called “Count,” by the general public “Uncle.”

Soon a pair of black oxen were submitted for my inspection, and I took them on his warranty that they had been through the lung-sickness, paid the price—rather a heavy one—and drove them to the wagon. But when I arrived there, what was my dismay to find it in possession of several Boers! The enemy had come in force during my absence, and taken hold of my goods

and chattels. There was no use remonstrating, back it must go to Zeerust. Fighting was out of the question, for I was outnumbered to such an extent that I had not a chance. To have recourse to the last was objectionable in the extreme, for who knows what a man may do in the height of passion when engaged in a *mélée*? and I, unfortunately, am not the most submissive creature if I think my toes are intentionally trod upon.

There was nothing for it that I could see but to put in the cattle and return; it was very galling, very humiliating, it is true, and to be looked at, possibly jeered at, by the whole Dutch population of the village as I passed through it, made me well wish I had paid the nasty five pounds at first, and saved myself the degradation now before me.

The cattle had been in yoke some time, and would have been in motion before, but that I felt it incumbent on me to expel a filthy Boer, who, boots and all, was lounging on my clean bed—for I had beautiful scarlet blankets, and took a pleasure in trying to keep it in some semblance of what I should have at home. He was a stiff-backed man, and as tall as myself, so I had no easy task; however, in our struggle we both dumped out of the back of the wagon, my adversary fortunately underneath. In this *rencontre* I had not much to boast of, and I knew it.

Things had reached this pitch when a horseman arrived; to my great joy I recognised him as the sheriff I had met and entertained at Leichtberg. Here he was the chief government officer, and, I believed, a good fellow. The case was explained to him by my foes, and its monstrosity enlarged on by myself; I was called every opprobrious epithet that Boer language could furnish.

Thus the scene lasted for half an hour, when the verdict was delivered to the effect that I was not a trader, simply a gentleman travelling for pleasure, so they had no right to exact the fee they demanded.

My cattle were again out of the yoke and up to their knees in pasture; the pets were scattered around enjoying themselves; the sheriff sat upon a stool quenching his thirst with brandy pawnee, while I was engaged sewing two buttons on my waistcoat that had deserted from their posts during the late engagement. Next morning we commenced the ascent of the hills at the back of Zeerust; it was a long and fatiguing pull, still it was accomplished before noon.

The view from their summit is truly beautiful, the landscape being charmingly diversified with hill, wood, and water, while the white houses of Jacobsdal and Zeerust peeped out of their dark-green luxuriant orchards—such a scene as one sees among the Surrey hills, only the habitations of man were far less numerous here, and the verdure more intensely brilliant. Charming views can be seen in Africa as well as in other parts of the world.

My driver uses his whip too much, and those who know this goad are well aware what a weapon of torture it can be made. I gently remonstrated, but mutiny and desertion glared in the eyes of the delinquent, therefore I said no more; my time had not yet come, thus the wretch plied his lash with additional vehemence.

That evening we made a long treck, and did not outspan till after dark; fires were lighted, although no wild beasts were apprehended, still, in a day or two they will be necessary, and there is nothing like commencing early.

Next day we toiled over a road rough in portions

from sun-cracks, but otherwise good. Timber became much more abundant, in places that looked like dry river-beds it was luxuriant, camile-dorn and the ordinary mimosa predominating.

After breakfast I gave Umganey a gorgeous old cricketing suit, of which blue and yellow were the chief colours. As he had been elevated to the post of major-domo it was necessary that he should be looked up to by his companions, and nothing is more conducive to this result among blacks—may I not add among whites?—as being well dressed. It did one good to see how his face beamed with delight when he received the treasures. Umganey when hired and Umganey now are two totally distinct persons; then he was thin and wasted, with a blotchy skin; now he is fat and sleek, while his hide shines as if it had been well greased.

Here one of the Macalacas rushed up to me; he brandished his assegai, looked volumes, but said nothing intelligible; then rent his clothes, or at least took them off, for he wore an old soldier's coat of the 15th, and sat down.

The driver stopped the bullocks, and I looked on in amazement. Was the wretched man about to commit hari-cari? Had he turned mad, or was this some vile attempt to create sympathy and prey upon my good nature? I looked on and knew not how to act. Should I kick him or should I pity him? It was hard to decide, for I was ignorant of the man's language, and he might either be the sufferer of some unknown or harassing wrong or a malingerer. Undecided what to think or do, the object of my solicitude seized several handfuls of earth, and not scattering it over his head—as the Jews did of old—rubbed his chest and armpits with it. Some

dreadful sorrow—fearful grief—must have overtaken this swarthy member of the human family, and not knowing how to condole, I left him, entered my wagon, and lay down.

I had smoked myself into the proper state of dreaminess to go to sleep when Umganey raised the curtain and looked into my apartment. On his face was a grin, very unsuited to the occasion, for I felt serious. At length he essayed to speak, and although he doubtless was voluminous and explicit—and further made up by pantomime what would have satisfied even a Surrey audience—I was as much in the dark as ever. My feelings and patience could stand it no longer; I sat up and rubbed my eyes. But Umganey had evidently not fulfilled his mission, on he chattered and chattered till I was perfectly nonplussed. That the affair was serious there could be no doubt—but what the affair was I did not know—or why should he waste so much breath upon it?

I was nearly arriving at the conclusion that my retainers had all gone mad, that they had seen the Evil One or some of his emissaries, when Umganey dropped upon his feet and hands, commenced wallowing about and grunting, at the same time pointing out on the velt. Like the glimmer of dawn stealing up in the east to indicate that day approaches, so a glimmer arose in my mind that something was intended to be inferred that would interest me. Again Umganey snorted and floundered about, and pointed in the direction he previously indicated. Oh! that's it, is it? Game of some kind was near at hand, and to let me know that such was the case all this trouble had been taken.

I had the saddle put on the Basuto pony, and,

taking my rifle, followed the first disturber of my peace of mind. The fellow was all himself again, and stepped out manfully. In three-quarters of a mile he approached a brow of land. Cautiously he crawled to its summit, then returned, and indicated that he wished me to do the same. I dismounted and followed him. Our stalk was careful and well planned, so I looked over; and what did I see, but two well-grown, reddish pigs, with tall, straight ears, terminating in tassels!

The ground was favourable for riding. Indian antipathies to shooting such game arose in my mind, so I resolved to kill them with the spear. I had several in my wagon, weapons made by the best man in England for such productions, so I returned and fetched one. I felt the point and edge of the long laurel-leaf-shaped weapon—in all parts it was as keen as a lancet; thus nothing could be more satisfactory for my first essay in hog-sticking in South Africa.

Over the brow my attendant and self went. In an instant he squatted in an earth; but, as the game was alarmed, I left him to his own devices, and rushed off at the best speed of my mount in pursuit. The two pigs kept together, and showed a wonderful amount of capacity for getting over the ground; for, although I applied my spurs unsparingly, I could not get within distance to use my weapon. At first the quarry went out over the velt, then turned and made for where we had first seen them, then they turned abruptly in their course, and rushed to where the Macalaca had taken up his post. “Pigs go to earth in Africa” flashed across me, “and the fellow has become earth-stopper.” So I put on a final spurt to blood my lance; but, just as I supposed I should succeed in doing so, the foremost charged the

hole my man was standing in front of; in a moment the animal went between his legs, tossed him several feet into the air, and he landed on his back, having completed a somersault. The foremost pig disappeared into the bowels of the earth, but the other, doubtlessly scared by my attendant falling right before him, made a *détour*, and again scampered off over the velt.

I could not overlook the insult my gillie had received, so did my utmost to make my horse overtake the companion of the perpetrator of the outrage. The pursued and pursuer were both getting tired, though, if anything, I had the best of it; but the brute kept doubling so, backward and forward, that it was as often on my left flank as on my right. Again and again I tried to bring my weapon into play, but was baulked. At length a chance arrived—a slight inequality of the ground gave me the advantage, and I delivered a severe jobbing thrust; but no sooner had the creature felt the steel, than, out of sheer perverseness—I am certain for no other reason—it turned sharp to the left, knocked my horse's fore-legs from under him, and gave me as clean a *coup* as ever man got, or wishes to receive. When I got up I had stars in my eyes; I was dumbfounded, and utterly incapable of further equestrian exploits; so I looked after the game still in flight, and heaped blessings on its head.

When my disaster occurred, the quarry was heading for the sanctuary its friend was now snugly ensconced in, and into it it would also go if my attendant did not bar its way. But, after the rough treatment he had received lately, I did not expect much of him. But when little is expected much sometimes is obtained.

The hog approached the hole; the Macalaca fled so

fast that he appeared all arms and legs ; but, wily man ! he had shut the entrance to the earth with several boughs of the prickliest of mimosa. The stricken creature rushed at this as if it were nothing—expected to go through as a bird would a spider's cobweb ; but it had reckoned without its host, and got stuck in consequence. The 'cute coloured man saw this, retraced his steps as rapidly as he retreated, and over the top of the orifice plied his assegai so dexterously, and with such good effect, that soon piggy became pork. I thought my thrust should have disabled the animal, and so it would with any creature possessed of less than seven lives ; for it had gone fifteen inches into the centre of the back close to the spine.

After a shake, and a good rub at my eyes, I did not find myself much worse, except in feelings, for few of us like to be taken down a peg by our own species, let alone by a pig. But my attendant was sadly bruised and scratched ; however, he doubtlessly harboured no after-feelings of malice, but made it up by feasting to repletion on the flesh of the perpetrator's nearest relative. This animal was one of that species—and common all over the northern portion of the country—which the Boers call *fleck-vark*.

I had scarcely got back to the wagon, when a jackal, the ordinary grey species, called by the Kaffirs *norwall*, of the skin of which the warmest and finest carosses are made, crossed the road in presence of the dogs. They all saw him, and a grand chase ensued—right out in the open—in which he was run into after going about a mile.

The other species found here is called the silver jackal. It has a black saddle-mark on the centre of its

back, plentifully interspersed with white hairs. It is a very pretty animal, and can be domesticated without difficulty, although occasionally given to be treacherous.

The voice of the jackal is not in the least disagreeable, as many people imagine—quite the reverse, I may say. In fact, it often recalled to me the giggle of a thoughtless, merry, school-girl. In a quiet still night—especially if the boys had left their fires and turned in—these pretty animals would come close round the wagon and keep up an uninterrupted conversation. The natives also have a liking for them, and generally smile, or even laugh, when they hear their voices; but there is another feature, a species of cupboard love, in their love for them—for no flesh do they appear to have greater avidity.

Another change has come over the appearance of the ant-heaps; instead now of being in hillocks, they have two or three chimney-shaped funnels for entrances rising to the height of three feet. These chimneys have a bell-mouth, such as are seen on the metal ventilators on board ship. As there is a reason for everything constructed by the animal creation, when of peculiar form or shape—for example, see the nests of some species of birds suspended at the termination of the finest limb of a tree, to make their young or eggs secure from the depredations of snakes—I puzzled my brains over the subject, but could not find an elucidation. However, Umganey, with the assistance of the driver, solved the mystery. Birds that prey upon ants are numerous in the locality, so that if the insects carried on their labour exposed, they would suffer sad diminution of their numbers; but by this contrivance they get air, and possibly light, without exposing themselves to the attacks of their

persecutors. These ventilators have an extremely queer effect on the landscape, for they are very numerous, and impress the mind of the beholder strongly with the knowledge that he is not at home, but in a far-distant land.

To day I shot in broad daylight an owl, a beautiful bird about the size of our English partridge. Its back is a delicate mottled slate-coloured grey, bearing a strong resemblance to those feathers I used to value so much, and which I obtained from the mallard duck, to make the green-drake fly of the angler. The stomach and under portion of the wings are snowy white; the talons strong but slender; the bill longer and finer than in the ordinary species of the family. This bird is diurnal as well as nocturnal; its flight is peculiarly swift and graceful, and it possesses undaunted courage. In fact, but for its persistent attack upon a bird much larger than itself, and a total disregard of my presence, it would not have lost its life. Having carefully skinned my trophy, I added it to my infant collection, which I hoped soon to see much increased.

My team of cattle treck admirably; the beasts I have lately procured are strong and willing; but the *tout ensemble* of the lot is not what it was when they left Natal. Never mind, "Handsome is that handsome does."

I forgot to mention that in my fray with the Dutchman I sustained a most serious injury to my hand. Like a goose, I inadvertently put my finger in his mouth, and he, like a wise man, nearly bit it off; since then I suffer much from the sore, the wound doubtless resulting from the rascal not cleaning his teeth.

CHAPTER XXI.

NEARING THE LION COUNTRY.

The Driver and I come to an Understanding—An Addition to the Larder—A Hospitable Englishman—A Fight between Two of my Native Attendants—Their Mode of Battle—Some more Pugnacious Boers—I shall have no Nonsense *this* time—The Affair satisfactorily ended—The Habit of Shaking Hands—Another Hospitable Englishman—Exchange of Presents—I meet some Traders—A Hunt proposed—Hartebeest brought down—A Herd of Quagga—I Shoot one—The Last Farm—In a Ditch—Rescued—Mr. Froud—Mr. Fayune—The Leader of the Anti-English Party—In the Transvaal—Stewed Quagga—Curious Habit at Dinner—A Shooting Contest—My Victory—Marking off a Farm—Koodoo—Nightly Preparations against Lions—The Kaminyani—Their Projected Hostilities against King Sechelle—I lose my Way—Come across a Trader—My Wagon turns up all right—A Pauw.

At length I have brought the driver to his level. He was not satisfied by over-flogging the cattle, but turned his whip upon the dogs and attendants. This, of course, could not be allowed, so I pointed out the errors of his ways, and he thought proper, after a little demur, to see them.

The only casualty to be reported is that one of the new cattle, bought from "the Count," is sick and unable to treck. The driver says it has lung-sickness, and I am not a sufficient judge to decide; whether or not, it is very annoying to lose its service.

About sunset we crossed three times the erratic bed of what must be in the rainy season a considerable river. Its bottom was one mass of giant boulders, while its banks were fringed with a thick belting of

dense timber. At the last ford we stuck for nearly half an hour, and as it was by this time dark, we outspanned soon after getting free. I was cautioned about this locality, as it frequently harboured lions, and a more liony place it would be difficult to find, so I had large fires made, and visited them twice during the night to see that they were kept up.

During the next day I shot two stein-buck, beautiful little animals about the size of Scotch roe-deer, but much lighter in colour. They were a welcome addition to our larder, for the stock of beef laid in at Zeerust has rapidly diminished with so many mouths to feed, and as to the consumption of mealy meal, it is really alarming. This is supposed to be the staple of your people's food, and should always be looked carefully after; if not it is sure to be wasted. Without a supply of it you cannot get on, and as it is dear, it adds much to the expenses of travelling by wagon.

This evening we reached a farmhouse. The proprietor was an Englishman, and entertained me most hospitably, besides sending to the wagon a quantity of milk, rusk, and beltong. His nearest neighbour is another countryman, about twenty miles north, and for months together he sees no stranger but an occasional passing Kaffir. Game abounds around him at some seasons; but, unless to supply his table and to keep them from invading his corn, he does not trouble them.

What an example this is for the Boers! I can assure the reader—and even then it is difficult to believe that any Christian could be guilty of such conduct—that I have seen them practise with their rifles upon bless-buck and spring-buck, leaving the carcasses to rot upon the plain.

In the evening, before turning in for the night, while sitting at my fire, an altercation ensued between two of my *attachés*—a Mashoona and Macalaca—over a piece of meat that was broiling. One word led to another, till both became intensely angry, and although I did not understand, they were doubtless using the choicest Billingsgate that they could command. At length both rushed to the wagon. Umganey whispered in my ear, “Assegai, Bass,” so I sprang up to prevent them from obtaining these weapons, of which they had tied an abundant supply along its outside. Frustrated in their attempt to arm themselves, they rushed upon each other. I would have interfered, but for my countryman preventing me, who quietly said, “Let them fight it out, or you will have no peace.” So I let them do so.

Immediately they clasped each other and commenced butting their heads together like a pair of sheep; the blows were terrific, for they sounded almost as loud as a well-executed clap of the hands; there was no attempt at boxing, only butting, and so effectually was it performed that blood commenced to flow from each of the antagonists’ noses. After the lapse of five minutes, employed in this kind of exciting work, both sat down to recover breath to renew the encounter: then I interfered, and in half an hour after I saw the combatants sitting at the same fire and chatting to each other most cordially, as if the past fight had no place even in their memories.

My host has an immense kraal for his cattle, the walls of which are quite six feet high; still he is in the act of adding another tier of stones along its top. The reason for this is, that during the wet season he is much

troubled with lions. Last spring he lost no less than eight head of bullocks and cows by their inroads.

Trekked at break of day, and in the afternoon arrived at Liewfontein (Lion Fountain). The outspanning-place was admirably situated, with water coming to the road. In the neighbourhood were several Boer houses, orchards, and large mealy gardens, while poplar and blue gum-trees margined a pond, a large one, formed by a dam made by the track. The oxen were very thirsty when taken out of the yoke, so I ordered them to be driven to water at once, and went into my wagon for a snooze.

I had not reposed over a few minutes, when Umganey rushed to me much excited. "That Boer man shoot ox!" he said, and disappeared in an instant.

In a moment I pulled on my boots and sprang from the wagon. Four Boers formed a *cordon* along the road, refused to let my cattle drink, and even, thirsty and parched as the poor creatures were, had forced them out on the velt. These men were all armed with rifles, and by their manner denoted their hostility. I in consequence took down my Martini-Henry, shoved a dozen cartridges into my trouser pocket, summoned the driver to attend me, and ordered the cattle to follow me to the water.

The wielder of the whip was in a terrible funk, and would have bolted if he could, but I gave him definitely to understand that he would do so at his risk, for his services I required as interpreter. Umganey in the meantime had got the bullocks together and close up to my heels, and thus I advanced upon the enemy, who closed together to bar my passage. When within fifty yards of the foe I made the driver explain that

the water being on the road was public property, that my beasts were parched with thirst and must drink, and if they wanted to do any shooting, they had but to let me know when they intended commencing. After this speech they gave place, and the oxen drank to their hearts' content.

However, the affair was not yet settled; in half an hour the Boers returned, considerably reinforced, and clamorously demanded to see me. Rifle in hand, I presented myself. At first I dreaded an attack, and all my boys and *attachés*, except the driver, seized their assegais and came to my support. This demonstration might have been the cause, for immediately afterwards negotiations were opened which terminated in peace, and my late foes imbibed as much of my coffee as they could comfortably carry, while the veterans of the party joined me in a *soupe* of brandy. Then all shook hands, and we were sworn friends for life. This habit of shaking hands is quite a nuisance among the Dutch descendants in South Africa. Whether their paws are clean or dirty, whether they know you or not, they do it, and would feel mortally offended if you refused. Supposing you are in a store; a Boer enters; he first shakes hands with the proprietors, and then with all the customers; whether he has seen them before or not is quite immaterial.

The result of hostilities being avoided was that the entire community, *frows* and *kinderkings*, visited me, and a fearful diminution of my stock of candy and fancy biscuits ensued. It is extraordinary how public opinion will change. From being a mortal enemy, I had become most popular. My flesh-pots might have had much to do in this revolution of feeling.

Next day we trecked to another Englishman's. He was a tall, handsome, grey-haired man of fifty. He received me most hospitably, and introduced me to his Dutch wife and numerous progeny. Examining my wagon, he found that one of the wheels was working on the axle, so brought his screw-jack, removed it, and cut out a washer from the hide of a giraffe, to be placed inside the hub to prevent further friction. After performing this service, which occupied over an hour, and in which he got himself considerably smeared with ante-friction grease, he sent me a present of six large fowls, two large baskets of peaches, and the same of apples, with quite an extensive assortment of onions, tomatoes, &c. &c.

To offer to pay for them I knew I could not, without offending; so I thought, what could I spare that would be useful? His boots were shabby, and I had a large stock, so I gave him a pair of new ones, reaching to the knee, with a strong pair of Latchford spurs attached. He would have declined, but I insisted; when he did not hesitate to tell me that, of all things he wanted, a pair of English boots were his greatest ambition; for since he had been in the country, nothing but felt shoon had decorated his feet.

Before parting, I gave him a silver-mounted briar-root pipe, such as would cost at home eight or ten shillings; but, not to be outdone in generosity, just as we commenced trecking, one of his youngsters drove up a nice heifer, in full milk, as a parting gift from his sire. I was the gainer in the transactions that had taken place, but I had used no artifice to be so; and I am certain many a year will roll by before the memory of this pleasant meeting is effaced.

Next afternoon I met some traders, who were outspanned, so I unyoked, to spend the night in their company. They had their boys busily engaged gathering wood for the night-fires, as many lions had lately been seen in the neighbourhood. My people, in consequence, were instructed to do likewise.

As the sun was still two hours high, we determined on having a hunt, as there was an abundance of game around us. They were both well mounted, and, like the majority of Africanders, were fearless horsemen.

After riding about half a mile, we were within a few hundred yards of a troop of hartebeests (*kama*). At a pre-arranged signal, off we started in pursuit as fast as our nags could carry us. From the first, I found that I was outpaced, and to such an extent that I pulled up to watch the actions of my companions. It was a glorious sight, and almost recompensed for the labour and trouble I had gone through. Regardless of holes and irregularities of the ground, both traders seemed to fly, while the game, no longer in doubt of their intentions, emulated each other in their desire to be first. But the horsemen by degrees, and afterwards faster, commenced to overhaul them. Seventy yards barely sever the pursuers from the pursued, when one of the hunters drops from his horse, fires, and in a moment is in the saddle, and careering in chase of the game at the same headlong, break-neck pace.

The shot has apparently been ineffective, for no animal has fallen. Soon the other trader jumps off and shoots, but with the same result. However, the quarry are getting fagged—sure sign that they are fat—and the hunters ride closer up to them before using their weapons. Twenty yards do not part the sportsmen

from the game, when both spring off their horses and shoot almost at the same moment. The result is that one brown beast is seen struggling on the ground, and another, sorely stricken and completely crippled, leaves the herd.

I had taken up my position of observation under a solitary tree, for the sake of the shelter it afforded, and there remained seated after the game fell. I might have been thus employed about ten minutes, when the earth resounded with the noise of numerous hoofs. I sprung up to learn the cause, when I perceived a herd of quagga galloping up-wind, prancing, bucking, and kicking like a drove of colts just turned loose. From the direction they were going, by riding a few hundred yards I would be within easy shooting distance, so I jumped into the saddle, and plied my spurs. The quaggas did not alter their course, but increased their speed. A strong pull on the curb checked my mount. In a moment I was on my feet, and singling out the largest, pressed the trigger. For a moment the dust prevented me knowing the result, but when it cleared away, one of the striped beauties was ineffectually trying to follow its comrades. I hurried up to put it out of pain, but it charged me, mouth open. When it was about ten paces distant, I again shot: my aim was the centre of the head; and with the report the bonnie beast fell to rise no more.

It was a splendid mature stallion, measuring nearly fourteen hands at the shoulder, and would have been an ornament to any zoological garden. Although pleased at my success, I could not help feeling regret at slaying even for food such a magnificent animal. However, there is no flesh that the blacks of this part of the

world like so much; and a good feed of it will put my people in good temper, and prepare them to face coming difficulties.

About sunset, I put some shot-cartridges in my pocket, and went down to the water. In a quarter of an hour I returned with four coran, three ducks, and two brace of Namaqua partridges—the latter killed at one shot out of a large flight that passed. The boys had a glorious feed that night, and so had the jackals, whose pleasant tittering laugh was to be heard till daylight terminated darkness. Bidding my friends good-bye at sunrise, I reached Brackfontein (Salt Water Fountain) at eleven o'clock.

This is the last farm, and has a most deserted woebegone appearance. The velt here is perfectly level, with a distant range of hills to the northward, running from east to west. The grass is so burnt up that the surface of the ground looks as if it had been parched, while the brack pond, covering several acres, is thick with thousands of different species of water-fowl.

On approaching the farmhouse my wagon mired quite up to the hubs in a ditch, and all the efforts of my cattle could not draw it out. I did not wish to unload, always a tedious process, and was debating what course to pursue, when the proprietor of the homestead, without being asked, and solely out of the goodness of his heart, sent down his team of oxen, which were made fast to the end of my treck-tow, and with a strong pull, and a pull together, took us out of our difficulties.

I found here assembled several Boers, and an Englishman of the name of Froud. The young gentleman informed me that he had been an officer in the Royal Engineers, or Artillery, and that now he was the state

surveyor for the infant republic of Transvaal. He was a very successful sportsman, and as proof of his prowess presented me with half of a noble roy-buck (red) which he had shot in the morning.

Here I received much courtesy and kindness, John Fayune, one of the Boers present, speaking English fluently. I had several times heard of this gentleman before, and from the character he had received, had no desire to make his acquaintance, for he was an acknowledged leader of the anti-English party, and reputed to be so bitter against my nationality, that he could scarcely be civil to them. He had distinguished himself in the numerous Kaffir wars, was an experienced and very successful elephant-hunter, had a large connection of relatives and friends, and was so popular with the exclusive party that it was whispered that he probably would be the next President.

Mr. Fayune is of French extraction, and still retains a great deal of the vivacity of his ancestors' race, stands about five feet eight, is slight and well-built, getting grey, and looks about fifty-five. Much to my surprise, we soon became excellent friends, and he volunteered me valuable information on routes, watering-places, and hunting-grounds.

Here I received an invitation to dinner, which I accepted; the *pièce de resistance* seemed to be stewed quagga, a dish that, however much admired by Boers and Kaffirs, I have not yet learned to like.

There is a sweet flavour about the flesh that at once causes me to feel squeamish; but there were, besides, antelope of different kinds, a fine joint of beef, and vegetables, so there was no necessity of leaving the board hungry. The people residing here seemed well-

to-do ; still there was that utter want of cleanliness and thrift that I have noticed in other of the farmers' dwellings.

A curious habit prevails here : the males all sit down to table together, the females waiting upon them, and not commencing their meal till the former have retired. In this there appears to me a great want of sociability, and a deficiency of etiquette to the fair sex. If such custom were introduced at home, it would produce a revolution in the land.

As there was a blacksmith and wheelwright here, I had my wagon overhauled, as it would be my last chance to replace any portion of it that might be out of order. This was done, and no charge made for the service, as no breakage was discovered.

After dinner all the men went out to shoot, possibly to show the stranger how expert they were with the rifle. The funnel-shaped ant-hills previously described were the targets, but the practice was anything but brilliant. I invariably refuse to enter into such contests : firstly, I am not a Wimbledon champion ; secondly, they often lead to jealousies and bickerings ; so I declined firing till actually obliged to do so. The first shot I made was a fair one, grazing the side of the target, the second cut it in two, thus beating my rivals. That they did not like it was apparent in all but Mr. Fayune, who laughed most heartily at my success, and unremittingly chaffed the vanquished at their defeat. Of course this was a piece of luck—no more—for doubtless any of them could have beaten me in a regular trial.

My Martini-Henry at once became an object of great admiration, and the short barrel elicited much

surprise at its performance, for the Boers invariably use weapons of immense length. After my victory, all mounted and rode off to the north-east to mark out a new farm. These people have a curious and certainly primitive way of measuring land—namely, as much as a horse will walk round in a given time; accordingly fast-walking horses are in great demand, and are sometimes sent for a hundred miles or more to be used for this purpose, the owner of such an animal making considerable sums of money by letting it out to hire.

I inspanned about half-past three, and in an hour afterwards had entered dense woodland; noting that the road went nearly due north, I struck off to the west to see what game was in the vicinity. Here I saw the first koodoo (*todo* Kaffir name), but did not succeed in getting a shot. About an hour afterwards I came upon a large herd of roy-buck; but the ground they were on was so dense and thick that I could not follow them on horseback, and they obstinately refused to be stalked. I forgot to mention that Mr. Fayune informed me that he was certain my horse was not saulted, and that I would be sure to lose him on the Crocodile River. I can only hope for the best, for I should indeed be sad if deprived of my enduring, affectionate, and intelligent Basuto pony after he has carried me so many miles.

Where we outspanned that evening a lion had been seen a few days previously, so I personally superintended the collection of wood, placed a loaded rifle and double-barrel in my bed, so as to be at hand at a moment's warning; but nothing disturbed us during the night. The hyænas appeared to be numerous in the locality, for their low, plaintive half-whistle, half-wail, could constantly be heard.

At evening next day we arrived at the chief village of a tribe of Kaffirs called Kaminyani. They have been resident here only about a quarter of a century, and are established on ground belonging to old King Sechelle, the man after Dr. Livingstone's own heart. For the privilege of settling here they have annually paid a royalty; but they have waxed fat, obtained immense herds of cattle, and become bumptious, and refused longer to acknowledge their suzerain. The consequence is that an immediate war is apprehended, and the neighbourhood is much disturbed, and reputed as very unsafe for travellers.

The stronghold of the Kaminyani is on a cobby, or hill, about eight hundred feet high, and probably a mile and a half in circumference at the base. Although it is an immense jumble of rocks, the inhabitants have managed to construct their huts in regular tiers up to the summit, on which stands their chief's residence. A river runs round two sides of the base, but a spring is reported to exist higher up among the rocks. Unless such were the case they could be beleaguered by a force such as Sechelle could easily send, and in a few days be compelled to surrender at discretion. Another thing, in case of war, what are these people going to do with their cattle? They could not take them up on the cobby, for it is almost destitute of vegetation. My opinion is that they had better reconsider their decision before they risk hostilities with so powerful a chief.

Next day we traversed velt covered with thorn-bushes and scattered trees; saw a few antelope and a large troop of quagga. I lost my way in the evening, but two hours after dark, to my great surprise, and, I may add, joy, came across a trader's wagon outspanned.

This was a most unexpected piece of good luck, for I not only got a comfortable meal but a bed. The owner was a young man, and going in the same direction as myself, so that I should now have company, the greatest boon I could desire.

His encampment was abundantly supplied with large fires, for he possessed two valuable saulted horses, and lions were known to be in the neighbourhood. About ten we both turned in, but sleep I could not, for the wagon actually swarmed with bugs, so I came forth and passed the remainder of the night on the wagon-box.

I was, further, very uneasy about my belongings, for I feared that, during my absence, proper precautions would not be taken to insure their safety. However, an hour after sunrise I heard the squeaking of a wheel that required grease; I looked up and beheld my ship of the desert slowly lumbering along towards us. All was safe, although the cattle had spent a restless night.

Halting the wagon I had the complaining wheel attended to, and gave the driver a piece of my mind for neglecting so important a portion of his duties. Next afternoon we approached the Notawaney, and must have seen during the afternoon trek thousands of guineafowls and francolins.

I shot a pauw, a bird weighing over fifty pounds' weight; it is a member of the bustard family, and possesses beautiful plumage. I consequently selected the choicest of its feathers for the benefit of some of my salmon-fishing friends.

CHAPTER XXII.

“LIONS !”

Travelling Habits of the Lion—His Haunting the Vicinity of Water—Conduct by Night and by Day—A Wearisome Treck—The Lion in the Matabele Country—The Skulking Hyænas—Wounds of the Natives—Livingstone on the South African Lion—The Bakatlas and the Lion—A Lion's Revenge—Livingstone Attacked—The Lion's shaking of his Prey—The Macalaca and his Musket—Our Bay Horse—Lions Expected—Precautions against Assault or Plunder—How Children are often Lost—The Notawaney—A Frightful Incline—“Lion !”—An Uncomfortable Night—The Scene of the Lions' Depredation—Horse Dead—Our People descend from their Trees—Collecting our Cattle—Bullock shot Dead in mistake for a Lion—Bravado—Tracing the Spoor—Come upon a Lioness—Killed on the Spot.

“You will not hear a lion until you have crossed the Notawaney River,” echoed in my ears Curtin, Gordon, Reed ; and, in fact, all the authorities in Zeerust said the same thing, although it was an undisputed fact that three had been seen close to Potschefstrom road a week or two before, and another had been killed a month or two previously in the vicinity of Klerksdorp. On this occasion the prophets were correct ; but it was one of those chance circumstances that sometimes occur, and lead to the belief that persons occasionally have the gift of divination.

The fact is that lions travel so much in the wet season that if there is one within a hundred miles of you, you can never feel certain that it will not pay you a visit ; they appear and disappear in the most mysterious manner, and generally in the most unexpected way. Thus you may

pass through the most suitable-looking haunts for the lord of beasts, and yet not discover a sign that would indicate his presence; while, on the other hand, on the open bare velt, where there is scarcely enough shelter to hide a Namaqua partridge, up his highness will rise before you as if he had sprung out of the soil.

Of one thing, however, you may feel certain: you will not discover him very far from water, unless at the season when the sexes come together, and then their conduct seems governed by no rule. At other times the lion always drinks once in twenty-four hours, frequently twice, immediately after dark or just before day breaks; but if he should chance to kill game during the day, and have made a hearty meal of it, before retiring to sleep he will go to water. As the lion is almost entirely nocturnal in his habits, this does not occur frequently, except in such distant, out-of-the-way places as are seldom intruded on by human beings. That the lion loves not man is certain, and by daylight will always avoid him if possible, unless he be come upon unawares, or be wounded, in either of which cases he will make a stand, and in the latter assuredly show fight.

The afternoon that we approached the Notawaney the clouds appeared surcharged with rain; towards sunset the whole face of the western horizon looked so dark and gloomy that one might well imagine that they intended to shut out the coming day.

I had had a long, wearisome, trying treck; game had been abundant on both sides of the route, but, with the exception of shooting a few francolins and guinea-fowl, I had not had my gun in my hands. But for the thorns this might have been otherwise; for they were so numerous, so dense, that I could not bring myself to

such an act of cruelty as to ride a horse through them. The wait-a-bit, the binder, and the *Mimosa horribilis*, or ivory needle, seemed here to revel and live in such close vicinity, that they were evidently on the most friendly terms.

It was expected that the river would be reached by sunset; but the road had been so heavy, and the heat so oppressive, that it now became obvious that we should be at least a couple of hours late.

As the Notawaney is not fordable immediately after heavy rains, and there was every indication that such were about to fall, it was imperative that we should push on, and get across before a flood descended. It is a standing rule among African travellers always to cross a river that you come to in your route; let what will happen after that is performed, you are then on the right side.

To what I have said about the lion here I should add one notable exception—namely, that in the Matabele country, where wars have been carried on incessantly for nearly half a century, the King of the Felidæ has become so bold, that he not only hunts by day, but will attack man without the slightest provocation. This is to be accounted for by the number of wounded and maimed men—unable to protect themselves—that have crawled off from the fight into the bush. This has even had an effect upon the hyænas; for in the country of Lubengulo they are so bold that they have been known to attack people, and it is no uncommon occurrence to hear that children nine or ten years of age have been carried off by them in broad daylight.

Among the Mashoonas, Macalacas, and Matabeles, it is frequently to be observed by strangers that many

of these people have fearful gashes on their face—a wound that looks as if the cheek had been torn off—and such, in fact, is the case. The unfortunate has been lying asleep on the velt by his fire, when the cowardly skulker has stolen upon him, and, with the rapidity of lightning, and a force that is irresistible, torn off the victim's cheek. These depredations are to be attributed to the large spotted hyæna, a beast that sometimes attains the height of a small donkey.

Before continuing my narrative, let me see what that apostolic man, David Livingstone, has to tell us in his "Travels in Africa" about the character of the South African lion.

"The Bakatla of the village Mabatsa were much troubled with lions, which leaped into their cattle-pens by night, and destroyed their cows. They even attacked the herds in open day. This was so unusual an occurrence, that the people believed that they were bewitched—'given,' as they said, 'into the power of the lions by a neighbouring tribe.' They went once to attack the animals, but, being rather a cowardly people compared to Bechuanas in general on such occasions, they returned without killing any."

Now these Bakatla were a peaceable, almost effeminate people, who supported themselves by their cattle and agriculture, and had lately suffered much from raids made upon them by their more warlike neighbours. The result was that many were driven off into the desert, wounded and starving, to become a prey to wild beasts. Thus the audacity of these lions is easily accounted for.

Again, "It is well known that if one in a troop of lions is killed, the others take the hint, and leave that part of the country."

This frequently occurs, but cannot be accepted as a rule; for I have known, when a lion has been killed, its mate has wandered about day and night, reeking its vengeance on whatever came in its way; in fact, taking revenge manifold for the injury it had suffered. A brute, when actuated by these feelings, as may well be imagined, is most dangerous, and bold to a degree if necessity require it, at the same time cunning and stealthy; and large as they may be, like all the cats, they have a faculty of hiding from observation truly surprising.

“When in the act of ramming down the bullets, I heard a shout. Starting, and looking half round, I saw the lion just in the act of springing upon me. I was upon a little height; he caught my shoulder as he sprang, and we both came to the ground below together. Growling horribly close to my ear, he shook me as a terrier dog does a rat. The shock produced a stupor, similar to that which seems to be felt by a mouse after the first shake of the cat. It caused a sort of dreaminess, in which there was no sense of pain or feeling of terror, though quite conscious of all that was happening. It was like what patients partially under the influence of chloroform describe, who see all the operation but feel not the knife.

“This singular condition was not the result of any mental process. The shake annihilated fear, and allowed no sense of horror in looking round at the beast. This peculiar state is probably produced in all animals killed by carnivora, and if so, is a merciful provision of our benevolent Creator for lessening the pain of death.”

Wonderful indeed are the works of the Almighty; even the inferior animals, although constituting the

food of carnivorous brutes, do not die a death of protracted pain, but breathe out their life in a fortunate state of unconsciousness of pain.

It is also a well-known fact, and I have seen many instances of it, that the wound produced by a lion's tooth breaks out and discharges periodically for several years to come after the injury has been done. This probably is caused either by the saliva, or corrupt animal matter adhering to the tusk inoculating the sore. But to my narrative.

About half an hour before sunset it commenced to rain, and the wind fell almost to a dead calm. At the time I was accompanied by the young trader previously mentioned, whose wagon followed mine about one hundred yards in rear; behind it was all our loose stock—horses, spare oxen, and two or three cows; these were followed by several blacks, specially among whom was a man of mine, a Macalaca, who was returning to his far-distant home from the Diamond-fields, where he had been to work in order to obtain the much-coveted musket, great coat, and blanket. The care he took of the first-mentioned showed with what affection he regarded his treasure—and never for a moment did he permit his loved weapon to be out of his sight, I may almost say out of his hands. It mattered not how warm it was, or how much he suffered from want of water, or what scampering he had to do over the velt to keep the oxen and horses together, his musket was in his hands, although he might have placed it in my wagon, where it would have been perfectly safe.

Among the loose cattle was a magnificent after-ox belonging to my comrade, a splendid beast, very fat, and as docile as an old milk-cow. It was beautifully

marked with black and white—in fact, was just such an animal as the eye of any one, connoisseur or not, would have rested on with admiration. Having mentioned one of the *dramatis personæ* who flourished in what I am about to relate, I will give an outline of another. This was a large, powerful bay horse, with black points. Although not possessed of much speed, it was very lasting and steady under fire, and had the reputation of being the best elephant-horse in the country. Being saulted—although past mark of mouth—it cost one hundred and twenty pounds in Marico, nearly two hundred miles to the south, so was of considerably more value here.

In accordance with my habit, I was ahead, walking about fifty yards in front of my leading-cattle, with three or four of the dogs about me, when the young trader came up and joined me. His conversation commenced with the remark, that he did not like the appearance of the night, and that if lions were about the ford, they would be certain to be up to mischief.

“What makes you think so?” I inquired.

“Just the night for them: on a clear night, or a calm night, you have little to fear from them. They will roar and make a row; but when they do that you need not trouble your head about them; but on such a night as this, they are as silent as a mute, and the first thing you know about them is that they are on the back of an ox or a horse. Captain, why don’t you carry your gun? You might want it here, I tell you, and I would not just keep so far ahead of the fore-loper.”

So with him I returned to get my double-barrel,

while he went to his own conveyance to give instructions to the people in rear of it to be particular to keep the loose stock together, and close up to the wagon.

In trecking, the point of danger—the place, in fact, from which you have most to apprehend from the attacks of wild beasts—is the rear, or behind the last wagon, when there are two or more together. It is from this reason that so many Boer and Kaffir children have been carried off by lions, as the favourite seat of these youngsters, and possibly the safest from other kinds of accidents, is the back part of the wagon, on which there is frequently a board slung to serve them as a seat.

The Notawaney has abrupt and precipitous banks on both sides : here, at dry seasons, the stream does not flow, but is in a succession of deep, stagnant pools, some of which extend a couple of hundred yards in length.

The sun had been down quite half an hour when I reached the southern bank ; the other wagon was close up, and all the loose cattle in their place. Putting on the brake, down my belongings slid to the bottom ; it was hazardous work, as the darkness had become very intense, so much so that I do not believe the driver could see more than an ox-length in front. When at the bottom we halted for a few minutes. The driver yells, “*Amaga!*” but the wagon is stuck. Another effort, still it does not move, but Umganey and myself go to the driver’s assistance, and through shouting and whipping force the cattle to lay against their yokes, and we slowly climb up the incline.

This incline resembled an artificial cutting, and was margined on both sides by a dense growth of trees, ever

the case in the vicinity of water in South Africa. At the top of the bank I told the driver to stop for a few minutes, in order that I might assist my companion if he got into difficulties. Like myself he reached the bottom safely, but unfortunately there he became a fixture. For nearly half an hour we could not release him; however, patience and perseverance, as in every instance, had their reward, and the exhausted oxen, grunting over the severity of their toil, at length hung to their work and hauled together: the wagon again moved, slowly at first, soon more rapidly, till the summit was passed.

But during these vexatious delays, the cattle that were loose took advantage of the absence of their guard, and strayed up and down the margin of the river. Orders were issued to have them re-collected without delay, and we trecked slowly on to the next outspanning-place, to be followed up by them as soon as possible.

For quite two hundred yards of our course the trees almost interlocked over our heads, while their stems beneath were hid in the densest description of matted underbrush.

With a feeling of relief we both got successfully through the woods, and entered again open velt, and we were congratulating ourselves that our work was over, when the yell of several people, the report of a gun, and an attempted panic among the working cattle, informed us that something unusual had taken place. Of what it was we were not long kept in ignorance, for one of our people, breathless from fright and exertion, came up shouting "Taou!" (Bechuana, lion.)

My friend and self rushed towards the scene of

action, with our guns ready for service ; but I had not gone many yards when Umganey stopped me, endeavouring, in the few broken words of English he could command, to prevent me going any farther.

“ What does the fellow say ? ” I asked my companion.

“ That the lion can see in the dark, and if you go near him now, he will see to kill you, while you can't see to shoot him. ”

While Umganey's interruption occurred, several voices from the vicinity of where the accident had happened called out, in Bechuana, that it was a *quay* (young cow) that had been killed. This was reassuring, for both had dreaded that the marauders had selected a horse, for, strange to say, they invariably choose that animal before all others for their prey.

My friend turned to me, and said, “ We had better listen to Umganey's advice, as it is only a cow ; there is no use running any risks for it. ” So we returned to the wagons, had large fires made, and planned our course of action for the morrow.

We could not help, however, being uneasy, for more than half our people were missing, and all the loose cattle and horses absent, they having doubtless in their alarm stampeded back.

A more uncomfortable night I have not often passed. A disagreeable, drizzling rain continued falling, and we dare not take shelter ; moreover, the dogs were kept in a constant state of alarm, giving utterance to their feelings of fear by incessant whines and suppressed growls ; while from the wood on the margin of the river, the lions were evidently having a battle over their prey ; jackals and hyænas around them giving vent to their

feelings by wailing because they were not participators in the feast.

About three in the morning I had been round the fires to urge the boys to keep them up, when suddenly the draft oxen, who were tied to their yokes—the far end of the treck-tow being fastened to a tree—made a desperate effort to break loose; but fortunately they were all secured with new buffalo reims, which I had procured in Marico to be used on such occasions as the present.

At length day broke, and we started for the scene of action, both armed with double eight-bore guns. We were not long kept in doubt what had been the victim, for there lay a large portion of the hind quarters of the old bay elephant-horse; but where were the lions? We did our best to discover them, but the underbrush was so dense that we could not hope for success.

From several of the neighbouring trees our absent people now descended. In them they had been perched all night; and what between bruises, thorns, and wet, looked indeed the personification of misery. The tall Macalaca also presented himself: he also had found a hiding-place; and from him we learn that he had fired at one of the lions, and was certain he had wounded it. Whether this was so or not, all agreed in the statement that the lions, of which they said there were seven, had only left the remains of the carcase when they heard us approach.

The missing cattle had now to be recovered; and we were far from feeling satisfied that we knew the extent of our losses. Taking the back trail, we spoorred them for two miles along the road; here they had

branched off (horses and cattle) to the right, traversed about three miles of velt, and halted in the open plain. The quantity of blood on the trail we could not understand at the time, but when we overtook the runaways the mystery was at once explained. The Macalaca, in his anxiety to kill a lion, had either missed that animal and lodged his bullet in an ox, or else in the dark mistaken the ox for a lion. Whichever way it was, there lay the handsome black and white bullock, with every evidence that the hours of its life were numbered, so the edict went forth for it to be slaughtered.

Returning to the wagons an hour or two afterwards, we found that in our absence the lions had come back, and taken away the remaining portion of the horse. This looked so much like an act of bravado that we resolved to make another effort for the destruction of some of their number; but among our people, none could be got venturesome enough to undertake the spooring. The promise of a cup of gunpowder ultimately induced the Macalaca to volunteer; and from the masterly manner in which he commenced his work, it was easy to see that he was an old hunter.

Soon he led us across the thick jungle on to more open ground; this he traversed at a rapid pace till some loose rocks forming the margin of a coppy were reached. For a few minutes he appeared at fault, when, looking to his left, with a grunt he pointed his finger, brought his gun down, and cocked it. Looking in the direction indicated, a lioness, with the hip-bone of the horse between her fore legs, lay facing us. Her expression denoted that she was anything but pleased by the interruption. At the time she was seventy-five yards off—too far to make certain work; so we resolved to lessen

the distance by one-half. While doing so, two lions that must have been behind the rocks got up, walked leisurely away, gradually increasing their speed, till they disappeared.

Such conduct was evidently not going to be pursued by her ladyship. With her eyes firmly fixed on us, and her head flat upon the ground, she watched our movements with an earnestness of expression that cannot be found in any other animal, her tail all the time moving gently to and fro.

My companion quietly said, *sotto voce*, "Don't fire till you see her ears twitch;" and scarcely had he said so than they were drawn back with a quick spasmodic motion. "Now's our time," he said; and a brace of bullets, one in the shoulder and another in the head, turned her over on her side, dead. Not a struggle occurred after the shots were fired, and so simultaneously were the triggers pressed that the two reports sounded as one.

On returning to the wagons we soon discovered what had made the oxen attempt to stampede, and the dogs so uneasy during the night. Several lions—the boys said five—had walked repeatedly round our encampment at less than a hundred yards' distance. In spite of the drizzling rain, there remained the spoor, a proof that the lads' assertions could not be controverted.

CHAPTER XXIII.

ON GORDON CUMMING'S GROUND.

English Park-like Scenery—My Companion does the Shooting—We meet a Boer Family—A Picnic on the Limpopo—The Gentle Art—Our Captures—The Belle of the Party—A Walk by the River-side—A Shriek—The Lion wounded to the Death—How the Lion was disturbed—Boer Women have no Fear of Wild Beasts—The Drinking-place of the Animals—The Mapaney Bush—The Boomslang Tree—Gordon Cumming's Driver—A Memorable Tree—The Limpopo River—The Animals that are found here—How I lost a Dog—A Fine Night—My Pony Restless—I replenish the Fires—A Yell and a Shot—The Dog brained—The Panther's Prey—A Good Shot—Bringing down Hartebeest—The Basuto Pony Sick—The Symptoms of his Disease—On the Spoor of the Giraffe—Honey-bird—Curious Superstition—Bagging my Second Pauw—The Black Bullock Dead—Swindled—Poor Pony Worse—His Intense Sufferings—Death puts an End to his Agony—The Secretary Bird—A Fight between One and a Snake—Origin of their Name—A Peculiar Insect—A Gathering of Boers—Welcomed—Religious Service—Impressive Scene.

AFTER leaving the Notawaney, we made three trecks through velt densely covered with thorns, and margined by heavy timber. Guinea-fowl and francolin were very abundant, while turtle-doves cooed from every tree. The country, although flat, is very pretty, and not unlike some English park scenery, owing to the quantity and diversity of the timber. Although close to the edge of the tropic of Capricorn, the foliage is far more characteristic of a temperate climate than of a tropical one.

I carry my gun or rifle constantly with me now, but it is more for protection to myself and animals than anything else, for all day large antelopes have been

within sight of us in one direction or another, and I have not pulled a trigger upon them. As if by common consent, my travelling-companion does the shooting, and I eat of the results of his prowess. As a rule there are no class of people more jealous of each other than sportsmen. It may be perhaps because I have killed such quantities of game, in nearly every part of the world, that my ardour has cooled ; but whether on a Scotch grouse moor or deer forest, an American prairie or African velt, I would sooner far see another do the shooting than do it myself. Yet I love to look on and see good work done in a proper sportsman-like manner.

Where we are now is the centre of Gordon Cumming's hunting-ground. Elephants and buffaloes have become scarce since then in this locality ; but there is still enough of other varieties of game to satisfy any but the most bloodthirsty. I wonder if his ghost now wanders about here in company with the spirits of the game he slew !

About eleven o'clock we crossed a small stream with very steep banks ; then, following the course of the road, turned off to the eastward, trecked on for about a mile, and halted in the middle of a fine open outspanning-place on the margin of the Limpopo. Two strongly-built, high, and massive kraals stood close by, ominous indications that the lord of the forest was fond of the neighbourhood. Small blame to him, I say, for selecting so pretty a locality.

While outspanning, up came another wagon ; the young trader knew its inmates, and accordingly introduced me. They were a Boer family travelling to a distant settlement, and consisted of a young husband,

younger wife, sister-in-law, and baby. As they spoke only a few words of English, and I an equally limited amount of Dutch, our conversation was not particularly instructive, in fact, I may say it was a little mixed. But for what I lacked the young trader made up; thus soon it was arranged that we should remain where we were, as it was Saturday, and not treck till the following afternoon.

As the Limpopo abounds with fish, we decided after lunch to try our skill in the gentle art, I promising that if the ladies would join us at the river, Umganey should make coffee for the party—in fact, try my best to make them have “a good time.” My motion was carried without opposition, so I had my chairs removed to the water’s edge, a fire lit, and everything put in order to render the picnic as pleasant as possible.

About three o’clock we commenced fishing, each having his whip-stick for a rod. Our tackle was primitive, and our bait a piece of fat. However, the fish here were not skilled in the deceptions practised by man, they bit ravenously, and consequently in a very short space of time we had captured more than we knew what to do with, for Kaffirs will not eat them at any price. Our basket consisted of two genera, one of which was what is called here the big scale, resembling very much the white fish (*Coregonus albus*) of the United States and Canada. Some of our prizes weighed upwards of ten pounds, and were evidently in first-class condition. The other fish were *siluridæ* of different species—some very large, black, and rather repulsive, others bright, beautifully spotted, and silvery. When the sport was at its height, a crocodile popped up his ugly snout close by, but before a rifle could be brought

to bear upon him, he had disappeared; however, the fish refused further to be taken, or else, fearing the interloper, had departed for other haunts.

About four the ladies joined us; Umganey was in great form, and soon produced an admirable cup of coffee for each, while a tin of fancy biscuits was handed round. Having allowed sufficient time for these good things to be consumed, as a *pièce de resistance* a bottle of sugar-plums was brought forth. The way the dear creatures took to them was charming, and how they disappeared was marvellous.

However, the young mother was called away to attend to the wants of her progeny, but the sister-in-law remained. I have so often spoken of fat Boer girls that I am almost ashamed again to allude to the subject, and will therefore go no further than to say that the belle of our party was no exception to the rule that seems to govern her race in this part of the world.

At last the young lady became tired of inactivity, and wandered along by the river's margin. She might have thought such charming rustic occupation would entitle her to the attention of a swain; but I could not speak her language, the young trader did not evidently believe in love-making, so she was allowed to proceed alone. She might have left us ten minutes probably, not more, when we heard a shriek so loud and piercing that each picked up his rifle and rushed towards the girl. What on earth could be the matter? Perfectly still, she stood gazing at something.

The race was to the swiftest, the brother-in-law was first by her side; next instant his heavy elephant-rifle was at his shoulder, the report echoed away in the

distance, and with it another sound, the yell of a lion wounded to the death. We were soon on the scene: the marauder struggled in hopeless agony, for his back was broken. A shot through the head at a few paces ended his career.

The young lady had disturbed his lordship taking his siesta on the edge of the reeds; at first she was under the impression that he was going to spring on her, but the shrill yell she gave, and her pluck in remaining facing him, seemed to have changed his resolution. Boer women, having from childhood upwards been associated with wild beasts and reptiles, have not the dread of them that our home-bred beauties possess.

The river is very lovely here, and is almost equally divided into pools and rapids about the size of the Thames at Maidenhead, and nearly uninterruptedly clothed with wood. As a rule the timber does not come to the margin of the water, but a belt of sand twenty or thirty yards wide severs them; this is particularly noticeable on the inner side of a bend in the river, these banks becoming the favourite resting-place of crocodiles.

At sunset I found much pleasure in sitting on the brow of the stream watching the opposite sand; being free from bush, it appeared to be selected by the greater portion of the weaker beasts for a drinking-place. First, the guinea-fowls and francolins would make their appearance at the edge of the sand, having stealthily crept out from the bush, after taking a good survey up and down to see that no danger lurked near, and being satisfied, they would run across the sand and enter the water to take a hurried wash and drink, the whole manœuvre not occupying a couple of minutes, after which they would

retreat in the same cautious manner. Then the larger animals would follow, the timid and weak first, the stronger varieties later on.

For the greater safety of our cattle we took advantage of the kraals; but with the exception of a lion howling across the river, and a few hyænas and jackals around our bivouac, we were untroubled with night marauders. Such was the wind-up of the day on which we picnicked on the Limpopo.

Here there is a great alteration in the appearance of the velt, for the reason that the terrible thorn scrub is giving place to the mapaney bush, a strange yet far from unattractive member of the vegetable kingdom.

I will attempt to describe it, for the farther we proceed north it becomes more abundant, till ultimately it altogether assumes the place of the ivory-needle thorn. Its leaf is thick and fleshy, with the stem, arteries, and veins deeply marked; the shape resembles the wings of a butterfly, or, rather, two hearts joined, which, when the sun becomes extremely hot, close together upwards, thus affording very little shelter from its rays. The height it grows to is usually about three feet, although under favourable circumstances—where the soil is moist and shelter from larger trees found—I have noted it attain an altitude of six feet. As the stems are thin, pliant, and very brittle, there is no difficulty in galloping through it, and as it is without thorns no injury occurs to your horse from doing so. The smaller antelopes are very partial to this cover, so much so that if you approach cautiously up wind to a clump of it you are certain to get a chance to bowl over a steinbuck or diker. Cattle and horses will not eat it; this is to be regretted, for if in its foliage they found satis-

factory food, it would prevent them wandering many a sorry mile in search of pasturage.

After two more trecks we arrived at the boomslang tree. This tree is almost historical, for when Gordon Cumming was encamped under its shelter, his faithful and well-tried driver Hendrick was seized and carried off from under his wagon by a lion. The intrepid hunter afterwards revenged his death, but even in that there is little consolation for the loss of a valuable servant.

This tree resembles a gigantic ash, has a very spongy, smooth bark, with a small, fish-shaped leaf. On its bark were cut the names of the most celebrated travellers that have visited this region, prominent among which are those of Gordon Cumming, now nearly obliterated from the ravages of time; Baynes, the well-known explorer; Hartley, the great elephant-hunter; and Mauch. In a weak moment I added my own. Its latitude is just to the south of the tropic of Capricorn, and within thirty yards of the beautiful Limpopo. This stream, if in England, would cause poets to rave about its attractions, and they certainly would have a subject deserving of their raptures, for its clear waters, wooded banks, and constantly repeated pools and rapids—here and there interrupted by beds of rocks or massive boulders—give it a bewitching air of enchantment.

The first time I viewed this portion of the charming river, on the opposite bank basked several crocodiles, while francolins and guinea-fowls dusted themselves in the loose sand. In the adjoining trees was a quantity of the pretty little grey monkey, familiar to the neighbourhood, while a little farther down its course drank about a dozen of the awkward-looking, but powerfully-

built bastard hartebeest. Elephants had been here lately; their spoor was to be seen all over the neighbourhood, and broken and felled trees attested the strength of this mighty rover of the forest.

The hippopotamus is also found, but not in such abundance as in years gone by. Nevertheless, every morning before the dew has left the grass, his immense tracks are easily recognised. In the forays that this ungainly animal makes nightly in search of food, it raises its feet so slightly that all that obstructs his passage gets broken down, thus leaving behind a well-marked path.

Although I did not lose a driver here, I lost a dog, fortunately the very one of my pack that I could best spare; it was a cross between the bulldog and mastiff; it possessed not a particle of courage; and, worse than that, it had a hankering affection for the wagon and the good things that it contained, that made it no easy matter to induce it to follow me.

When I purchased the brute I truly thought I had obtained a treasure, and the way he fought with his companions to establish his position made me believe that he would prove a useful and formidable companion in the pursuit of the *feræ naturæ*; but he had not been with me more than a few days when he appeared to lose all heart, and live but to gratify his appetite.

In these distant countries, and following such a life as I am now doing, the horse becomes one of the most watchful animals you possess. During darkness they will very seldom lie down, because I suppose in that state they could be taken at disadvantage by prowling marauders. The following incident happened in this way.

After my habit I had tied the little bay Basuto pony to the after-wheel of the wagon. I had been asleep several hours, when I was aroused by a sudden jerk upon it. Picking up my gun, and shoving my feet into slippers, I went out to discover what made the horse so restive. The night was fine, with a clear unclouded moon, such a moon that, with the exception of the hunter's moon in America, could nowhere else be seen. As far as I could note, there was nothing in the vicinity to alarm the animals; so I turned my attention to the fires, which were now reduced to a mass of glowing ashes. On similar occasions, and under such circumstances (fine clear nights), fires are of little use; still, as an abundant supply of fuel had been collected, I placed a quantity on my own fire, the after one just behind the wagon, then went forward, and did the same to the one in front of the leading bullocks. I noticed that the majority of the oxen were standing, and facing in the same direction; still I did not consider that a circumstance deserving of particular consideration.

I scratched Swartland's withers and fondled his head, then spoke to Buffle, and afterwards had a talk with Poonah; and while doing so I heard a yell from the wagon; in a moment I jumped on one side, so as to avail myself of the light of the fire; almost instantaneously something passed between me and it; I fired a snap-shot, and, to my disgust, I found I had shot—dead as a stone—the worthless dog. At the moment I fired he was in the jaws of a panther, and the injuries he had sustained from its fangs showed that if my luckless bullet had not ended his career, he could not have long survived the frightful gashes along

his loins. It's no use regretting, but had my ball gone a foot farther back, I doubtless would have had a splendid hide to repay me for my loss, if such it deserves to be considered.

Here I made what I thought a wondrously good shot, yet it was one of those lucky incidents that are the exception, not the rule. I found some hartebeest in the woodlands; they were very wary, and as the Basuto had not speed enough, I could not overtake them. I, however, followed the game for nearly an hour; but whenever I dismounted to fire, they managed to get trees and bushes between myself and the object of my aim. At length my perseverance drove them into the open country, on reaching which they all went off as hard as they could scamper. I was going to give the chase up as a hopeless job, although we wanted meat, so was about to retrace my steps when the antelopes halted.

They were over five hundred yards distant, still I raised my sight, knelt on the ground, and took aim—not that I expected to kill, I can assure you—when, with the report, the leader of the herd sprung into the air, pitched upon her head, made half a dozen ineffectual efforts to regain her legs, each more futile than the preceding, then turned upon her flank, and yielded up the last remains of vitality.

I am in great trouble. My poor little Basuto pony, the last of my Natal stud, has died of horse-sickness. Thus I have to grieve over the double loss of a most valuable animal and also a hardy affectionate companion. We have travelled so far together that I am certain the reader will agree with me that the manner of his death deserves to be explained.

When turned out to feed in the morning, contrary to his habit—instead of commencing grazing—he went and lay down. Umganey called my attention to the circumstance; but, not being conversant with horse-sickness and its symptoms, I thought nothing of the matter, but went out to shoot some guinea-fowl or francolins. On my return, about eleven o'clock, I proceeded to look at my poor little beast; he was evidently very ill, and so restless that he could not lie still in the sequestered corner he had chosen; during a quarter of an hour I was with him he must have got up and lain down four or five times. The symptoms of the disease that showed themselves now were great puffiness over the eyes, which themselves seemed to have lost all lustre, great swelling beneath and between the jaw-bones, a hot crusted nose, a staring coat, with much sweating along the flanks. I was perfectly helpless to relieve him—I had never heard of a cure, and the sufferer appeared too far gone to be benefited, even if I did.

As the horse could not travel in this state, I gave orders for trecking to be postponed till the morrow, and, accompanied by a Macalaca—the fellow who shot the ox—went out to shoot. About a mile from home we struck the spoor of some giraffes, but it was too stale to follow. This is the first of their long slipper-like footprints I have seen. At this time a honey-bird came and challenged us to follow it, we did so for half an hour, when it led us to a very large mimosa-tree, with one of its limbs torn off. My attendant ascended it, and procured about a pound of beautiful honey, in a comb as white as snow. The natives, but I am not of their opinion, firmly believe that this bird is not to be trusted—that it will frequently lead those who follow it up to

lions and snakes. Such a supposition is easily accounted for—in following the bird, a lion may have been encountered, or a snake nearly trodden upon ; but that it is the honey the knowing little scoundrel is after there is no doubt in my mind. Its perfect confidence in man is extraordinary—it will hover in your face, sometimes you may almost imagine that it is going to light upon your shoulder, after which it will fly forward a few paces, and, by its actions and voice, do all in its power to keep attracting your attention. It is customary, after robbing the bees' nest, to leave some of the spoils as a reward to the discoverer.

Although I saw several different species of antelope, I did not shoot at any, as the range within which they permitted me to come was always very long. However, I bagged my second pauw, a fine bird, but not so large as its predecessor.

On getting back to the wagon I found the black bullock that I had purchased from the Count dead ; it had never worked since the first day after leaving Zeerust, and then only for a few hours. This was an unmistakable case of lung-sickness, and I cannot help believing that the vendor was aware that the beast was ill when he sold it to me. It is disagreeable to suspect people of dishonest practices—at least, so we should call such a transaction in England ; but in the centre of Africa they deem victimising one another deserving approbation, and a fit subject for future chaff.

The poor little horse is also worse, its head more swollen, while the perspiration drops from its flanks. It will not leave the wagon, and when I make my appearance follows me persistently about, even attempting to rest its head on my shoulder. It has a dreadful

cough, coming from its very vitals, and so severe that you would almost expect it to wrench the victim in two. That cough once heard will never be forgotten, and when it breaks the stillness of the night must fill the hunter's heart with anguish. Poor pony, I could do nothing for him; he lay down and got up, stood over the cooking-fire, haunted Umganey and myself. At last darkness came; I retired to the privacy of my sanctuary, but that fearful, incessant cough kept me awake, sleep was impossible; about midnight a more severe attack of it took place, accompanied by griping. The struggles caused me to come out of the wagon. Umganey was before me; silently, I joined his side, while he stood and looked on. I spoke a few kind words to the sufferer, and even in its intense agony it raised its head as if expressing thanks for the sympathy. But a more severe spasm than the previous one came; the victim tried to regain its legs, spun round in the effort, and fell—a few kicks, a perceptible shiver, a quantity of spume rushed from the nostrils, and all was over. Umganey said nothing, but seemed to think much; I heaved a sigh, the depth and earnestness of which are seldom rivalled by those who deplore the loss of their friends.

Next day we made a very long trek; when we left our encampment almost every tree had a vulture in it, and every bush contained a jackal or hyæna. I should like to have stolen back and witnessed the onslaught, had not poor pony's carcass played so prominent a part in it. At night we reached the last bend of the Limpopo, for whereas it has been flowing north previously, from this part it turns abruptly, and flows almost directly east. The scenery here is remarkably pretty, rolling

land covered with timber ; but farther down the stream's course it must be more beautiful still, for its progress seems to be interrupted by high hills. But there the wayfarer, accompanied by horses and bullocks, cannot enter, for the tsetse-fly has its home among them.

While walking in front of my wagon, for I am now by compulsion a pedestrian, I observed great numbers of secretary birds in search of their prey—snakes. As nobody ever shoots or molests them, they are very tame, and evince no fear of man even when within twenty or even fewer yards. They are of a slate colour, and about the size of the Kaffir crane, with a formidable eagle-shaped beak, and a very large, harsh-expressed black eye. They do not walk or hop, but march along with strides so long and regular that it suggests to the beholder that they are assuming a means of progression—playing a part—to attract attention. That snakes are abundant in the locality is obvious, or they would not be here.

I had the fortune to witness a combat between one of them and its prey ; as I was within a short distance I was able to see the fight from beginning to end. The bird rushed forward to seize its victim, but the latter being on the alert, this was not accomplished. The attacking party then strutted round, holding out the termination of its wing to be struck at by the snake. This occurred many times till the assailed made a false blow, and in a moment the bird had it in its powerful beak, and flew up with it aloft, quite two hundred yards, then dropped the reptile, descending after it with the velocity of a hawk. Again and again this was repeated, till, I suppose, the snake being dead, it was carried off to a quiet retreat to be made a meal of.

In the Colony and the Republican States there is a law against their destruction, for doubtless they do a great deal of good. Why they are called secretary-birds I learned from an old French work. On the top of the head each bird has a few stiff, upright detached feathers; these were supposed to resemble the quill or quills stuck behind the ears of a clerk, hence the name secretary. They are easily domesticated, and have been introduced into Guadaloupe and other French West Indian Islands to make war upon the formidable reptile—the *fir-de-lance*.

A most peculiar insect here first came under my notice; it was nearly an inch and a half long, clothed with almost black hair, and about the thickness of a pipe-stem. The method it adopts to secure its prey is very peculiar, and, in fact, rather astounding, for it places its head and shoulders in the entrance to an ant-hole, then commences a quick vibratory motion. The ants peep out or come near to learn the cause of the disturbance, when they are seized by the powerful forceps with which the intruder's tail is armed; but the puzzle is, with its head and shoulders sunk in the ground, how does it see its prey?

Our treck completed, and the camping-ground reached, to my surprise I found at least a dozen Boer wagons there before me. Both males and females came forth and gave me a hearty welcome, the latter each bearing a plate of rusk bread as an offering. This habit I have not observed among the Boers before, and I should imagine it had a Biblical origin; whether or not, it is a very pleasant way of making the stranger feel that he is welcome. Just as night was closing in a religious service was performed. An old grey-headed

man prayed and spoke a few words of advice to the listeners; his delivery was very forcible and earnest. I could but imperfectly understand him, still I felt that what was being said was truth fit for all to listen to, and practice. Twenty stalwart men, with numerous women and children, kneeling upon the ground, addressing their supplications to Heaven, in the middle of the forest, the whole scene illuminated by the fitful blaze of several fires, was as impressive a picture as any one could gaze on. As I viewed it I thought of the Covenanters in days of old, when the peat-moss and the mulr-side were the only places where they could offer their adoration to their God without fear of interruption and violence.

CHAPTER XXIV.

AMONG THE DOPPERS.

Their Dress and Habits—Slavery—Opposed to the Missionaries—Their probable Errand—Hated by the Blacks—Conservative—Bad Farmers in a splendid Land—The Patriarch—A Morning Visit—Our Conversation—Suspensions of my Object in Travelling—Why not be a Dopper?—Offer to provide a *Frou* for me—The Bible—Primitive Notions about the Sun—Cornered—A High priced Horse—Crocodile-Shooting—An Elephant Hunt—My Noble Steed—The poor Brute's Wounds and Sores—Wakes up at the Sound of War—The Chase begun—We come upon the Enemy—Charge—I bring down one Cow—And help a Hunter to bring down another Cow—Cruelty of killing Cow—Elephants—Baked Elephant's Foot—I leave the Doppers—Can Man quit the Civilised World?—A Fit of the Blues—On the March again.

THE Boers I am surrounded by all belong to a religious sect called "Doppers." Their dress is a short single-breasted coat, trousers very loose, and peculiar-shaped, broad-brimmed hats. They consider themselves to be the chosen people of God, and are still in search of the promised land, which they profess to believe exists farther north in the interior of Africa. The heathen, they say, have been given them as a heritage, so they are slave-owners. They are brave and fearless, constantly carrying on war against one or other of the native tribes; and when actually engaged in hostilities, spare neither sex, but carry off the young children to be reared as bondsmen. They are hard masters, not sparing the lash, and exacting for the food their folks get constant and severe manual labour.

No kind look or even word here cheers the slave's

task, for no bond of sympathy exists between the Dopper and the black man. His horse he takes pleasure in, his cattle he is proud of, but a heathen merits not a thought. The missionaries they are particularly opposed to, because of their calling, and have on more than one occasion sacked their habitations, and appropriated or destroyed their property. As their sole support is the produce of their flocks and game, they have become expert hunters and fearless horsemen.

What their errand is here it would be difficult to say, although they profess to be trecking to Ovampo Land, north of Damara Land ; but this I believe a subterfuge to obtain possession, through the right of occupation, of the rich bottom-lands on the north and west side of the Limpopo. The country where they are outspanned belongs to Kama, King of the Bechuana ; in fact, his dominions commenced from the moment we crossed the Notawaney.

The black population of these parts love not the Boers, but hate and dread the Doppers ; so it is not at all unlikely there will be blood shed before they are dispossessed, or have established themselves firmly in their new locality.

There is no doubt that beautiful farms might be made all along this river's margin, if irrigation were introduced—farms that would rival any in the habitable earth. But the Doppers are not the people to cultivate them as they would require to be, for they are opposed to all new inventions, mechanical contrivances, &c., that were not known or used by their ancestors ; and to raise water artificially, build dams, form canals—all necessary to irrigation—are what they simply would not do.

The old man who delivered the address and offered up prayer last night is a fine specimen of the genus *homo*. Over six feet in height, well-formed, and straight as a lath, with a great profusion of white beard and hair, he speaks sufficient English to be intelligible, and is remarkable among his comrades for cleanliness.

I went over in the morning to pay him a visit. He was seated on a chair, shaving down strips of giraffe hide for wagon-whips; underneath his foot was a yoke-key, on which he constantly stropped his knife. At his task he was evidently an expert, for the keen knife in his hands shaved off the edges with the precision of a plane. His granddaughter, a bonnie blooming lass of fifteen, brought me a chair and set it down close to the old man's, who expressed himself particularly pleased at my visit. Again the young lady returned, and presented both of us with a pipe, already carefully filled with tobacco; on the top of the bowl of each was a glowing coal. Several large trees grew near, affording a grateful shade, for the sun was commencing to get warm. Surmising that I was in for a long pow-wow, I resolved to make a virtue of necessity, and submit. The surroundings were very pretty—numerous brilliantly-painted wagons—for such the Boer loves—with snow-white tents, several horses picketed close by, cattle, goats, and sheep a little way off; while quite a number of large yellow dogs walked restlessly about to avoid the persecuting flies. A tame wildebeest and young quagga were so much at home that they became a bore, and although driven by the children repeatedly off, returned in a few minutes to nibble the edge of your cap, or besmear your shoulder with the saliva that hung from their lips.

The old man informed me that he knew of my coming, and, like his predecessors, wished to know what a soldier wanted in this country. I told him my object was to hunt, become conversant with the people, and see the land.

"Yes, to see the country, and bring back the red-coated soldiers to take possession of it. You Englishmen did this in the old Colony, in Natal, and now they are coming here," he said.

"No, you are quite mistaken; I have no such object. The people of my country have not the slightest idea that I am here. I am——" and here I hesitated, for what I was going to say struck me with a peculiar force—"I am a wanderer."

"A wanderer," he rejoined. "That means one without a home, without *frow* or *kinderkins*, without friends?"

"Just so."

"And how is this? You are not old, you are strong and brave, and you have a wagon and cattle, and plenty of guns and ammunition. Get a *frow*, before it is too late to raise heirs to your name; and if you do as I tell you, as you are a man skilled in war, come with us to Ovampo Land, where we will make a new home, and wax rich in our old age."

In joke, I asked him where the wife was to be found.

His reply was given without hesitation. "My granddaughter is old enough to marry. She is like what my *frow* was at her age, both in appearance and ways—and the Great Father knows she was a good wife;" and the old man heaved a sigh.

"Is your wife dead?"

"Gone to the promised land to await my coming."

Poor old fellow ! This was spoken so earnestly, so full of feeling, that I felt the loss of his partner had been a great and lasting sorrow.

And the pretty little girl, quite unconscious that she had been offered in marriage, came in childlike simplicity and placed a stool at her grandfather's feet, busied herself replenishing his pipe, after accomplishing which she performed the same office for myself.

"Will you go with us to the new home we are about to make? You say you have no home, and we will give you one. You have no people, you shall be of us. You are also learned, you can read and write, and know foreign lands: when I am called away you would be the father of the folk."

"How can I answer now? I must think the matter over," I responded. And the pretty girl looked up in my face with a pleading coaxing glance, so that I felt it necessary to brace myself, pull myself together, for past experience told me that I never could successfully face a battery composed of woman's eyes.

Again the old man started the conversation. "You read 'the book' (Bible), and believe it the same as we do."

"Yes; it is a wonderful book. And so, too, is the world we live in; only to think that it is not only revolving on its axis"—here the old man seemed puzzled, so, to simplify matters, I added—"but going round the sun."

"Going round the sun!" exclaimed the old gentleman. "No; this world stands still, and the sun goes round the earth. I would have thought your learning and 'the book' would have taught you different." I had evidently fallen very much in his estimation.

“The book !” I cried out ; “where does it teach what you say ? I read it often, have read it from my childhood upwards, but I do not know where it tells us what you say.”

“Did not Joshua command the sun to stand still ? If it had not being moving would this have been necessary ?” said my venerable friend, while a well-satisfied smile on his countenance showed that he considered that I had nothing further to say. However, I must make an answer ; it would not thus do to be beaten, and a happy thought struck me at the moment.

“True, it is quite correct what you say ; you are well acquainted with the book. Joshua did command the sun to stand still, but we are not told, which we doubtlessly would have been, that he set it going again.”

The old gentleman pondered and wondered, but said nothing. I interrupted his reverie by shaking his hand and bidding him adieu.

Among the good qualities these primitive people possess is honesty, for which they are noted far and wide—doubtless one of their principal virtues. You may even with safety take their word about the merits of a horse or ox they have for sale. I fear, as a rule, so much cannot be done in similar transactions with our own countrymen.

I made an effort to buy a horse here : all were for sale if a purchaser would give the price asked, but that was enormous. One bay I picked out with plenty of substance, and that of fair quality, nearly fifteen hands high, and aged, I rode and liked very much, but a hundred and thirty pounds were asked for him, with

evidently no intention of abatement in the price. Of course, this animal would be guaranteed as saulted, and with fair luck you might make his value ten times over in ivory secured through his assistance ; but I hesitated to run the risk. I had further a hope that something cheaper might be procured at Bamanwatto.

In the afternoon I went down to the river ; there I met two young Boers, who were shooting crocodiles, the reptiles having incurred their enmity by having lately carried off several goats and sheep. I remained with them for some time, and saw some very good shooting done ; one immense brute, quite sixteen feet long, although swimming rapidly at the distance of fifty yards, was hit fair in the eye. It turned on its back a moment after as dead as dead could be.

I attended prayers in the evening, and after worship was over, brought the old gentleman to sup with me ; he enjoyed his food, his pipe, and last, though not least, his *soupe* of Martell's cognac.

" Bass, Bass, a Boer man wants you," energetically called Umganey.

Day was but commencing to break, and I was still asleep when thus disturbed. I hurriedly pulled on my pantaloons and boots, and came forth. With the assistance of the driver I was able to make out the cause of the early visit. A drove of elephants had passed during the night, and the Boers wished me to accompany them in the hunt.

I thanked my visitor for his courtesy, but explained that I had no horse. This had been anticipated, however, and a mount was at my service. Hurriedly swallowing my coffee, filling my pockets with rusk and beltong, buckling on a sharp pair of spurs, and

shouldering one of my eight-bore double-barrels, I went over to where the cavalcade were already mustering.

My horse was pointed out; it was already saddled, and in charge of a Kaffir, and truly was as wretched an antediluvian animal—all scored and cut, in fact, there did not appear to be a sound piece of hide on any portion of its body—as ever has been seen or ever will be. The thorns might have done much towards this disfigurement, the jambock more; but there were several parallel scars across the rump that strongly whispered that master lion at some period or other had made a strong effort to jump this horse. My hosts evidently saw disappointment in my countenance, for they at once commenced to enumerate its wonderful qualities; and while they enlarged on them I thought if it had new fore legs, new hind ones, and a new barrel, it might not be quite so bad. It was one of the “has beens,” and an admirable specimen of that race; still it was a horse, and without a horse I must defer at present having a shot at the elephants. I got upon its back; it fairly cringed under my weight. I dismounted and removed the saddle, and, oh, what a sore it had along the vertebræ! I thought I would decline going, but then there were elephants to be shot, so I sent for one of my own saddles and a numnah, tightened up the girths, and remounted. Poor wretch! it did not give beneath me as much as before, but I will acknowledge it did yield a little. One thing I did not like, in fact very much disliked, was, that I should not be able to lead the hunt, and show off before the young Boers, in fact, teach them that an Englishman was quite their equal in handling horse and gun. But, dear me, what evil star shone on me, that I should be compelled to figure on

such a Rosinante? I was almost making up my mind to buy the bay horse for which a hundred and thirty pounds had been asked, when further anguish on the subject was stopped by our reaching the trail. A couple of Kaffirs led the way so as to prevent the spoor being lost; but this was almost unnecessary, so distinct was the path the mighty beasts had made through the forest.

It was evident from this, and their not having deviated to the right or left to feed, that they were in a hurry, and probably travelling from one haunt to another. Such a chase is generally a long one, not unfrequently an unsuccessful one; but Fortune chose to smile favourably on us; for, after about three hours' ride, the Kaffirs declared the game in sight.

Not a word had been spoken for some time; now ensued a hurried consultation; when the programme decided upon was for all to approach as cautiously as possible till the elephants took the alarm, when we were to charge, each hunter selecting his prey.

For three hundred yards or more we silently stole through the forest in single file; at length the leading horseman halted, and we wheeled into line. Over the underbrush towered the backs of a number of dark animals. Closer and closer to them we approached, when one of the elephants uttered a shrill note, and in an instant the herd was crashing through the timber, raising a tremendous dust, and sending rotten limbs of the brushwood flying far and wide.

The poor old horse, who had up to this moment been a regular slug, took the bit in his teeth, and tore along in pursuit as well as the best of them. He needed no guiding—I only sat still and let him go. If the others

were after the elephants so was he ; and if his fore legs only kept him up, there was very little doubt that soon I would be afforded an occasion to use my gun.

A big tusker, of course, I wanted, but such I could not see ; so, to rectify the deficiency, singled out the largest animal in the herd, and made a dash to get alongside of it. In this I was successful, for the old nag knew his work like a book, and required no forcing. Holding the gun at arm's length I fired. The heavy charge nearly sprung it out of my hands ; but the elephant staggered, recovered itself, staggered again, and then came to a dead stop.

With the report of the gun the veteran charger had sheered off to the left, expecting pursuit, and not getting it he easily pulled up, so I turned him round again so as to renew the contest.

The poor stricken beast was evidently very sick—blood flowed from its mouth and trunk. It seemed desirous of charging, but was without the power to do it ; so I jumped off my horse, went within fifteen yards, and fired at the space between the ear and eye. With a crush the poor thing fell, struggled violently to regain its feet, rolled over upon its side, and yielded up life. It was a cow in the prime of life, but its tusks did not exceed eight or nine pounds in weight.

I now became cognisant that a heavy fusilade was going on to my left ; I, in consequence, rode in that direction, when I overtook a Boer having quite a lively time with a wounded one—she charged so persistently and fiercely that he was as often the pursued as pursuer ; so I left my horse, watched my chance, and, while she was turning round to keep her front to her first antagonist, put two bullets in her side, a foot or

so behind the shoulder-blade. Attempting to charge, she fell upon her head, burying both tusks in the ground, and died, game to the last with her front to the enemy. The action was short, sharp, and decisive, I may say brilliant, the only drawback being that both were cows.

I admit that shooting cow-elephants requires some apology—in my ardour I did not think of sex, and was not aware that the animal I had killed was a female till after its death; in delivering the *coup-de-chasse* to the last, it was so severely wounded before I came up that it could not have survived. It certainly was an unlucky entry into elephant-hunting in Africa to commence by killing cows.

Now the chase was over the old horse was as great a slug as before, and it required no ordinary amount of care and attention to keep him on his limbs. However, he took me home in safety, and I parted with him with only one regret, and that was that he was not at least twenty years younger.

Next morning we had baked elephant's foot: it was one mass of gelatine, excellently flavoured, and, I am certain, very sustaining.

I had done so well in the hunt, in fact distinguished myself, that I was regarded by all with eyes of great approval; the old warrior did not hesitate to tell me so, and was so patronising that I commenced to fear that he would again broach the matrimonial scheme. The little maid brought me twice a day an ample supply of clotted milk—an admirable dish when you get accustomed to it—and from her simplicity of manner it was evident she knew nothing of the matter.

During the stay of these Boers in this locality they

have killed eleven elephants, fourteen lions, beside giraffes, and innumerable antelopes.

Soon after noon on the third day I trecked from here, amid a crowd assembled to see me off, and numerous were the good wishes showered upon my head by these primitive people, nor was it without regret I left them; for I commenced to think that a wanderer like myself might do worse than pitch his tent among such simple-hearted, kindly folks. But can one situated as I am give up civilisation for ever? It is doubtful; more than that—improbable. I have tried it. How often have I left England firmly resolved never to return? Yet again, and again, and again I find myself back, threading the old familiar streets, and gazing in wonder at the changes the towns and cities have gone through. I often think that the cause of this is I have travelled too much, and that I seek for a country that never will be found—namely, where all that is attractive of every climate is combined in one.

Again, I am not so young as I was; and where are the youthful hearts and merry faces that stood by me in the Crimea, that sailed with me over the Indian Ocean, that marched by my side over the flat steppes of China? where are they? Gone to the spirit land, and I am left, a wanderer on the earth. Would that fate had decreed otherwise! But it is too late, too late; and on, on I must drift with the tide till it lands me—where? If we could foretell the future, I would go and see the spot. “Fortune has frowned on us! fate is adverse to us! luck against us!” we cry out; but believe me, reader, this is an error—we make our own destiny.

Partings, as a rule, are unpleasant, and my late one seems to have given me a heavy attack of the blues; as

I have not time to spare for such a fashionable complaint, I will return to the velt near the tropic of Capricorn, Africa.

For two miles from the river the track was hard, and therefore conducive to quick travelling, after that we got into heavy sand, sufficient to break a bullock's heart; but my cattle were strong and well-rested, and toiled manfully through, so that we reached our outspanning-place before the sun went down. Lions were again about the wagon all night, so that I got no sleep, and in the morning I did not feel very fit for travelling; but go we must, for, till we reach Soshong, the capital of Bamanwatto, there are fifty miles before us, without a drop of water.

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CHAPTER XXV.

KAMA, KING OF THE BECHUANAS.

Sand, Sand, Sand!—A Howling Waste—My poor Cattle suffer—A Wretched Family of Bushmen—Novel Mode of obtaining Water—Fearful Condition of the Bush-People—Their Skill and Courage in Hunting—Wild Dogs—Magnificent Animals—How they Hunt—Attack the Lion sometimes—One of my Cattle Missing—Insolence of my Driver—A Bandy-legged Runner—Fruitless Chase—My Driver returns—A Salt-Pan—Curious Effect by Moonlight—The Keme, or Wild Water-Melon—Scavenger Beetle—The Macalaca kills Something at last—The Capital of Bamanwatto in the Distance—We reach Soshong—The Inhabitants—Welcomed—My poor Cattle—Stuck in a dry River-bed—Soshong—The Kloof Community—Huts—Compassed—A Favourite Post of Observation—The “Ladies”—Riding—Oxen—Their Load—The Missionaries’ Houses—The European Community—Defence of the Spring—The High-roads of Commerce—The Merchants—Suburb of Soshong—Population—King Kama—Sketch of his Career—Bechuana Law of Succession—A Romance.

SAND, sand, sand, so deep that the felloes of the wheels are entirely covered, the brush short and scant, the few trees very dwarfed, and the surface of the soil rolling—such are the characteristics of the country. No game, no birds, naught cheers the scene—it is a land of desolation, of waste, that nothing can ever be done to improve, that will never render food for the wild animals, let alone for man. It is a barrier to progression northwards that no art can remove, no skill overcome, no ingenuity bridge. Such is the south-eastern end of the Kalahari, the Great Thirst Land.

I grieve for my poor cattle; fain would I let them rest, but cannot, so the whip has to be kept employed, or we should never traverse this inhospitable region.

To lighten the load as much as possible, I walk; to learn the mysteries of bullock-driving, I assist the driver; to kill *ennui*, to drown thought, to prevent regrets at loss of companionship, I seek occupation. This howling waste may possibly act as a barrier to prevent the amalgamation of races, or a cordon to stop the belligerent tribes of the south harassing with constant wars the more effeminate natives of the tropics.

Just before outspanning at noon, we overtook a most wretched family party of bushmen. When they first perceived us, they appeared disposed to run away; but whether our manner was reassuring, or the number of black attendants that accompanied me gave them confidence, they stood by the road waiting our approach. Father, mother, and two little bits of bairns, not possessing enough clothing among them to make one respectable garment, and so thin and withered about the limbs, were the components of this family party. The man was armed with a small bow and a dozen tiny arrows, the points of which were poisoned with the milky juice of the *Euphorbia arborescens*. This plant grows abundantly about these parts, and is an exceedingly deadly poison. The wife carried on her back three or four ostrich eggs, doubtless filled with water, for their orifices were closed with a bunch of grass, their stock of liquid most probably having been obtained from sucking-holes in the vicinity.

To those unacquainted with this method of obtaining water, an explanation might be interesting. A hole is made in sand showing evidence of moistness, into which is pushed a tube with a quantity of grass attached to its end. This forms a vacuum for the water to collect in, when it is raised to the surface, and ultimately into

the mouth of the sucker, after which it is most adroitly squirted into an ostrich shell. Of course no European, except *in extremis*, would drink fluid thus treated. Still, I knew a noble colonel, who can frequently be seen in "the Row" during the season, who was only too glad to obtain a supply of water thus procured.

The callosities upon these poor creatures' bodies were fearful to look at: they doubtlessly are formed from lying upon the hard ground, without any intermediate substance to shield them from its irregularities. You should have seen the comical expression of delight in the two youngsters' faces when I handed each a large stick of beltong!

A good-sized piece of wildebeest, and a gallon and a half of cold mealy-meal porridge, gladdened the old people, who at once commenced to light a fire and make themselves comfortable.

It is really surprising how these people manage to exist; that they are not devoured by wild animals seems also extraordinary, for their home is in their haunts, yet they take no precautions for their safety. If the truth were known, doubtless a very great number die from their attacks.

These Kalahari bush-people are the most persevering and courageous hunters: once on the trail of game, they never leave it till they kill; and their skill in stalking cannot be surpassed. Even the ostrich, the wariest of all game, falls before their tiny poisoned arrows. In fact, but for the Bushmen, the supply of wild ostrich feathers would be very scant indeed.

I had just succeeded in making these wanderers comfortable for the time being, when the big Macalaca lad came to me. His musket was in his hand, and his

face wore a grave expression. Pointing with his hand, he uttered the magic word, "*Taow!*" the Bechuana for lion.

Taking my double gun, I followed him; but although he endeavoured to point out something, for the life of me I could not see it. Indicating by gestures that he wished me to sit down, I did so, and he took a place by my side. There was some scrub between us where the lion was supposed to be, and if there were an animal there it could not leave its retreat without offering a shot. For a quarter of an hour we kept guard, and our inactivity began to become irksome, when first one, then a second specimen of wild dog came forth, and coolly stared at us. Unless they had been lying at length on the ground, it appeared impossible that they could have remained so long unseen. Did I shoot at them? I hear asked. No, not for the world. They were such grand animals, such thorough-looking sportsmen, that I gazed at them in silent admiration, wishing I were the possessor of both. They must have stood nearly thirty inches at the shoulder, looked like a cross between a greyhound and mastiff, and were a beautiful rich fawn-colour. After surveying me for a couple of minutes, they walked coolly off, as if the presence of man were to them a matter of the most perfect indifference.

A pack of these wild dogs, consisting of forty or fifty members, is known to exist within a few miles of this locality. They have frequently been seen hunting, and the Boers whom I so lately left have suffered severely from their depredations. It is reported that even the lion occasionally is assailed by them and killed. When these encounters take place, they generally originate

through the dogs trying to drive the king of beasts off some prey he has captured. From what I could learn, they give tongue when hunting, and the pack run very close together when in chase.

I yoked the cattle at half-past two, and at three I discovered that one of the oxen was missing. The animal in question had for some time been ill, and the Boers pronounced its ailment lung-sickness. In consequence, I had ordered the driver to pay particular attention that it was kept in front of the wagon, as I knew, if it were allowed to straggle behind, it would probably be left to its fate and reported to me as dead.

On questioning the driver where the ox was, he coolly told me, "Dead." Why had the circumstance not been reported to me before, so that I might have seen the carcase? I asked quietly. "Didn't know, and didn't care"—with a few choice Hottentot expressions, was the answer I got.

For a time this fellow had been so insolent that I had resolved on the first good occasion to give him a severe pommeling, and see the effect it would have on his future conduct; so, without an instant's delay, I rushed at him. He dropped his whip, and artfully doubled under my arm. Having thus cleverly escaped me, I started in pursuit; but although the wretch was bandy-legged, he could run like an antelope, so, breathless, and in anything but an amiable frame of mind, I gave up the chase; and there was nothing for it but for me to take the whip and drive myself. This was the more annoying as there was scarcely any perceptible track, and the sand was fearfully heavy. The rascal disappeared, going in the direction of our yesterday's encampment; this I supposed to be a ruse to frighten

me. But in it he was much mistaken, for all his valuables were on the wagon, and I knew that he prized them too highly to forfeit them thus.

That evening's was a most fatiguing journey, and it was some time after dark before the cattle were unyoked. About half-past ten at night I had them put in again, and lo! and behold, the driver was there to assist. I said not a word about our past difference, but allowed him to go about his work as if nothing had happened.

At half-past one we were abreast of a large salt-pan. The moon at the time was shining beautifully bright, and this immense plane, for it extended over several hundred acres, looked like an enormous field covered with snow. At first I could not believe my eyes, and actually walked down into it to assure myself that I was not mistaken. It is composed probably of the nitrate of lime, and the crust is nearly half an inch thick.

Timber again becomes more abundant, and here I first saw that wonderful and valuable plant, the keme (*Cucumis kaffir*), or wild water-melon. Farther westward it is found in great quantities, even sufficiently so to water the travellers' cattle with their juice.

Grass is also becoming more plentiful, but it is not the grass upon the velt to the south. In fact, this much resembles the bunch grass of the buffalo plains of North America, for it grows in large tufts, with a wide space of sand between each plant. We now outspanned till day-break, but at the first indication of light in the east got again under way. With the advance of day I could note that the country was become really well-wooded and very park-like.

Although I had seen the scavenger beetle the whole

way across the plains, they do not equal in size and number those found here. They are a curious insect, and most industriously prosecute their work, which is that of collecting the dung of cattle, &c., and forming it into a round mass about the size of a lawn tennis ball. When this is accomplished they roll it off to a suitable place, where they bury it, after having deposited their larvæ in its interior. The beetle when shoving its load over the ground does so with its head down.

Soon after sunrise we passed through between two ridges of hills, covered with vegetation on their southern slopes, although they appeared an immense jumble of loose stone, and destitute of soil, trees were to be seen almost to their summit. Both these ridges, I should imagine, rose to an elevation of fourteen or fifteen hundred feet, and the formation is a reddish decayed sandstone. Here the Macalaca shot a hartebeest, or kama, the first thing I believe he has killed since the bullock fell before his gun.

But although we have been progressing slowly we are still moving on, and at length the gap is passed, an immense plain opens before us, margined on one side by the Bamanwatto hills, on the other by the Kalahari Desert, or Great Thirst-Land, which does not terminate till the doons are reached that are bathed by the South Atlantic Ocean.

A large white house, the go-down or hong of the principal traders in Soshong, marks the site of the town, which still must be ten or twelve miles off. However, there can be no halt now till we reach it, for the cattle are suffering terribly from want of water, and none can be obtained till we get there.

In time we wind round the base of a very picturesque

rocky hill. Along its foot on the north side grow considerable quantities of mealies and Kaffir corn. Soon after we enter a track laid out between fences of withered mimosa and other thorny plants. Gardens of grain increase in number and width. At last one of the inhabitants is seen, then another, till quite a number are around us. They are all women, some nearly naked, all very scantily clothed. They are well-formed, and although not pretty, look good-natured; and, above all, they are polite, for not one fails to greet the soil-stained travellers with their pretty expression of welcome, "Dumela."

The sand was very heavy, and the treck was the most severe I had ever experienced. The poor cattle groaned, but could not bellow. Their eyes looked sad and plaintive, while the slow manner in which they lifted their feet told but too truly of the unwonted fatigue they had endured. I was not the freshest man in the world myself, and I felt convinced that I was one of the dirtiest, if the colour of my hands indicated what my face was like.

At length two or three cottages become visible, then a few Kaffir huts, afterwards more and more, till it becomes apparent that we are approaching a town of large population.

The end of this portion of the journey is not yet accomplished, a dry river-bed has to be crossed, and, alas! in it we stick. For over half an hour we remain in this annoying position; a final effort is made, a number of Bechuanas put their shoulders to the wheels, and in a few minutes we are once more progressing. The next mile and a half is rapidly got over, for the cattle already smell water, and I order the halt close adjoining Mr. Cruikshank's store. The driver threw down his whip,

and gave a shout, Umganey did the same, so did the followers, and I, no way loth, joined in. A most trying part of my journey is completed.

Soshong, the capital of Bamanwatto, and the residence of the King of the Bechuana people, is situated on a flat covered with sand and stone, through the centre of which passes a dry river-bed. In the memory of some of the oldest inhabitants it was a constant stream; but as in many other parts of South Africa, more especially in the country bordering the Kalahari, it has gradually dried up. The hills which form the background of the town are very rugged, barren, covered with loose stone, and almost destitute of vegetation. Into this penetrates a kloof, forming almost an equilateral triangle, the base of which, drawing a line across the plain at its entrance, must be over a mile wide. Over this space in regular order are built the inhabitants' huts.

As at Moiloes, in Marico, the community is divided into what we may call divisions, brigades, and regiments, each ruled over by inferior chiefs, who are answerable to the king for the conduct of their subordinates. The huts are all built alike, and have an upright circular wall of clay of the diameter of about twelve feet, and are roofed with reeds in the shape of an umbrella-top. To each residence there is a little compound, enclosed by a thick hedge of cut thorn bushes. Not unfrequently also in the enclosure will be found a storehouse, a miniature copy of the larger residence. In these compounds the women do their domestic work, such as grinding corn, &c. At the top of the kloof is the spring that once supplied the dried-up river, and from which all water consumed in the town is derived.

A sight that I frequently enjoyed was to take my

stand on the road at the upper end of the town, and watch the women or cattle going or returning from water. The ladies are very black and very scantily supplied with clothing, yet there is among them as much vanity as among their sex in civilised society. Beads are their favourite ornaments; and some of them carry this passion to such an extent as to wear a kilt of them, constructed very much after the pattern of a "dress improver," and not unfrequently weighing upwards of twenty pounds. Besides this ornament, nearly all wear anklets and bracelets, and among the richer a caross of narwhal-jackal, or some of the numerous wild cat family, suspended from their shoulders.

The well is the great gossiping-place; and as water has to be fetched twice a day, no doubt much time is lost in tearing reputations to pieces, concocting marriages, and talking scandal.

But as there is a road through the hills that passes close to the water, which leads out into the country beyond, numbers of men can also be seen. Generally, these are hunters returning from or going to distant parts of the northern country, some are on foot, others on the backs of bullocks.

These riding-oxen become very docile, and are ridden without a saddle, a piece of stick thrust through the cartilage of the nose, and to each end of which a string is tied, performs the duty of bridle. Nothing struck me as appearing so foreign and strange as men mounted on such chargers. It looks like applying the ox to a wrong use; but this is a mistake, for they can perform long journeys so mounted, as well as carry a considerable additional load, and what they lack in speed they make up in sure-footedness.

If you had an opportunity of examining the freight of many of these saddled cattle, you would find it probably far more valuable than you expected — fine ivory, worth even here eight and sixpence a pound; and blood ostrich-feathers, which the traders down on the flat will be glad to obtain for half a sovereign apiece.

Before reaching the spring, on high ground overlooking the road, stand on the left Mr. Mackenzie's house, and on the right Mr. Hepburn's, both missionaries, and employed by the London Missionary Society. These buildings are plain and unostentatious, but comfortable. Near the former stands a large white building, which does duty for church and school-house.

But no vegetation ornaments the locality, water is too scarce and precious to be spared for irrigation, and without it vegetable life will not flourish. At the back of both these gentlemen's houses the hills rise to the height of eight or nine hundred feet, and their slope, which is very steep, is covered with immense and apparently loose boulders, that the least shake of earthquake would send crashing into the valley beneath in one gigantic avalanche. In fact, a few years ago, a rock of great size fell from the summit, and now remains lodged where the path once ran.

On the side of the village next the plain, the three or four traders, who compose the European community, have their cottages and stores, the principal of which is rather a large building surrounded with a strong upright picket fence. In this yard water has been obtained by sinking a well thirty feet; but in case Soshong should be attacked by an enemy, this, doubtless, would be filled up, for the strength of the

place consists in being able to keep an enemy from obtaining water.

The Bechuanas are well aware of this, and as they are now fairly armed, and far from destitute of courage, it would take a very strong and very determined force to obtain possession of the spring, for it is flanked on both sides with ridges of high ground, so formed by nature that a hundred skirmishers would be able to keep a division at bay. From the town branch off the two great highroads of commerce—the one passing round the east end of the Bamanwatto Hills, goes to the Matabele country, and the districts adjoining the Zambesi; the other, following the west face of the hills, leads to Lake N'gami, the Zouga and Linyanti districts. But the whole trade of these immense countries is in the hands of five or six people, who frequently are absent two and even three years, and from the date of their departure till their return no one knows whether they still live or not. Their life is a hazardous one; unfriendly natives, savage beasts, venomous reptiles, and malignant fevers have all to be faced, so that if they do sometimes accomplish the task of making a little money, they have well earned it.

About half a mile from Soshong proper is a similar kloof, which contains about half the number of huts, and may be considered a suburb, the total population of the two being close upon 15,000 souls.

Kama, meaning hartebeest, is king here; he is the eldest son of Sekomi, who ruled this land when Dr. Livingstone visited it. By Bechuana law the eldest son does not succeed his father, thus Kama would not now be monarch but for the effeteness of his brother and the vacillating, weak policy of old Sekomi previous to his

death. Romances may occur in Europe—men there may play for crowns and win or lose them, but they cannot exceed the romance attached to the life of the present Bechuana king. It would occupy too much space to enter into all the particulars, but a short sketch of his career may interest.

When quite a lad his father became jealous of his popularity, and attempted to take his life, but being providentially warned, he eluded those employed to assassinate him. He then called his regiment together (for all children born in a town in the same year as a prince become members of the regiment which the royal child at maturity commands. All these, privates and chiefs, go through the ceremonies attached to circumcision at one time, and this is supposed to bind them firmly together for good or bad) and asked them to follow him, and they did so to a man. With his numerous attendants he travelled away north-west, to the Lake and Mababe districts, where they lived by the chase, and by degrees amassed considerable wealth in ostrich-feathers and ivory.

But old Sekomi, through his senility, had got his country into war with the formidable Matabeles, who, even now in their fights, fire their guns, and, throwing them away, rush in upon their enemies with the assegai. Everything seemed to go against the Bechuana cause; wherever they met the enemy they were vanquished, so that at length Soshong was threatened, and the old king was at his wit's end. At length, although very distasteful to him, he thought of sending for Kama, and he did so. Insulted, injured, and even his life sought for, the brave young man at once responded, marched day and night across the Kalahari Desert, the Great

Thirst Land, and arrived at his father's home just in time to save the capital.

An engagement was fought; the Bechuanas, led by their pet prince (I do not mean that he sat on a horse on a hill and witnessed his men struggling through the battle, but that he was actually at their head), attacked the Matabeles, and utterly drove them over the face of the country.

For a time he was reinstated, but it was only for a time; Kamani, the younger brother, had the ear of the old king, and again Kama's destruction was plotted. His followers learned this and told him of it, and a second time he retired, leaving the reins of government in the hands of his father and his junior brother, Kamani.

Again the Bechuana country was threatened; again Kama came to its relief, and successfully did what he had done before. At length the old king died, and Kamani reigned in his stead. Still Soshong did not prosper; Kama was again called upon to save it, when he deposed his brother and now is sovereign.

After he had been established as monarch, Kamani, who had taken refuge with Sechelle, tried to revolutionise the country, but failed, and took shelter in one of the traders' houses. Here he was surrounded, and doubtless would have been killed; but he escaped through a window, when the first man he met was Kama, who, dismounting from his horse, assisted his brother on its back, and advised him to fly, for, although king, he could not control the feelings of animosity of his people against one who was at once unpopular, and had constantly brought the country into disgrace.

CHAPTER XXVI.

WITH THE MISSIONARIES AT SOSHONG.

A Standing Invitation—A Delightful Evening—A Life of True Religion—Mr. Mackenzie—Mr. Hepburn—Invited to Outspan at Mr. Mackenzie's—My Host's Little Girl—Introduced to King Kama—His Personal Appearance and Manners—Permits me to Hunt—Sunday in Soshong—Worship—An Impressive Day—The Life of a Missionary—How the Bechuanas meet with Accident—An Amusing Experience on Mr. Hepburn's part—Inquiring for Water, he finds a Lion and Lioness (asleep)—Hunters boxed up in a Kraal—On the Look-out for the Imprisoning Lion—Putting an End to his Existence—Sneers of Stay-at-home Sportsmen—A Vindication of Gordon Cumming—Among the Traders at Soshong—Charlie —, a Character—An Unknown arrives—Personal Appearance of the Mysterious Individual—Charlie tells a Story in his best Style—But is interrupted by a regular "Bom-bom"—The "Bom-bom"-Ejaculator's Nose is pulled—The Outrage stopped—Explanation of the Strange Conduct—Charlie abstracts Roast Ducks—Found in the "Bom-bom"—Charlie abruptly disappears.

MR. DAWSON, the representative of Mr. Cruikshanks, to whom I had a letter of introduction, came out and welcomed me. He had heard of my arrival in Marico, but did not believe I could reach Soshong alone. However, as I had succeeded, a standing invitation was given me to take my meals with him whenever so disposed.

I soon managed to buy some water from a number of girls hovering about with large lotas on their heads, containing five or six gallons; for each I paid a pannikin full of unground mealies.

Having had a good wash, and put on clean garments, I went up to deliver a letter of introduction to

the senior missionary, Mr. Mackenzie, and also, as he was postmaster, to obtain my letters. My reception was so kind and sincere that I commenced to think that hospitality here exceeded that of all other parts of the earth. However, after enjoying my noon-day meal with my new friend, I returned to the wagon to look after sundry matters that required attention.

In the evening Mr. Mackenzie, accompanied by Mr. Hepburn, paid me a visit, and we had a long and most delightful chat about our native lands. This pleasure was very great to me, and doubtless it must have been the same to them, for what a life of seclusion is theirs, buried almost in a living tomb ! And all this is endured by these honest, toiling, good men, to carry the gospel to the heathen, and teach its admirable precepts. In both of them I recognised persons carried away by no schisms or creeds, but who exactly corresponded with the couplet—

“ For forms and creeds let fools and zealots fight,
He scarcely can be wrong whose heart is in the right.”

And in my belief this fact, so vigorously expressed, forms the essence of true religion. I parted with them early, as they had to attend school that night ; but I looked forward to often meeting them again before I left the scene of their labour.

Mr. Mackenzie is a tall, square-built man, about five feet eleven in height, fair in complexion, genial in countenance, with great strength of character stamped on his brow, and an unmistakable Highlander, speaking the English language with wonderful purity and intonation. Mr. Hepburn is taller but slighter, a Northumberland man I should think, with great energy

and resolution, and gifted with more than ordinary eloquence. The twain are a host in themselves; and while our country is represented by men of their type it is bound to be honoured, in whatever part of the earth their labours are carried on.

I discharged my driver, put Umganey in charge, and dined with Mr. Dawson. Several of the community, I may say all of them, dropped in after dinner, so I was introduced, and found them a most intelligent, gentlemanly lot of people. It was late, or rather early, when I walked across the open to my wagon; all had so readily become familiar that I might have been in England had not the simpering giggle of the jackal, and the mournful protracted note of the hyæna awoke the stillness of the night.

Next day, according to promise, I paid both Mr. Mackenzie and Mr. Hepburn a visit. My reception was most cordial, and Soshong, with all its ugliness of barren rocks and unattractive dwellings, became established in my mind as quite a pleasant spot. The former gentleman invited me to come up to his house and there outspan, while my cattle would be taken care of by his herd, and pasture along with his own drove. This was too good an offer to be refused, as I knew Ackerman would be leading all his too-willing comrades into every mealy garden in the district. But I had no driver I explained.

“Oh, that is nothing; I will send mine;” and his was sent forthwith. In a couple of hours afterwards the old familiar wagon was outspanned within twenty yards of his hall door. It was arranged between us that Mr. Mackenzie should introduce me to the young King on the morrow, the very thing I most desired.

When I went to bed that night, having supped with my new friend, and accepted his kind invitation to be his guest during my stay, I slept the sleep that the invalid craves for, and makes a person in health fit for aught he may be called upon to perform on the coming day.

In the morning my host's charming little daughter, a young lady of eleven years, brought me a cup of tea. When I saw her bonnie bright face, fair hair, and blue eyes, I could scarce believe myself in the heart of Africa. At eight we breakfasted, and at nine went down to the kotla to visit the young King.

We found him seated on a chair, with a dozen of his head men around him, dispensing justice. As soon as the case was settled that he was then hearing, he came forward in the most affable manner, and shook hands with both of us. He deserves a description, and, as nothing can be said but in his favour, it gives me pleasure to write it.

In height he stands about five feet eleven, is very slim, of an excellent figure, and as upright as if he had been drilled; his head he carries very erect, and his features are small but regular, with a very pleasant expression of countenance, and a very intelligent eye. His hands and feet are remarkably small and well-formed, the former like a lady's, on account of the perfect nails and softness of the skin. In manner he is thoroughly self-possessed, very quiet, and neither obtrusive nor bashful. He dresses in European clothes made out of moleskin, and is scrupulously neat and tidy. He had heard of my intended visit, and gave me a most cordial welcome. My having been in the army was, he said, a bond of sympathy between us, for a brave man deserves the respect even of his enemy.

Kama, although black, I found in every respect a gentleman—in appearance excessively well-bred, and in his language, as interpreted by Mr. Mackenzie, courteous and considerate. From the date of our interview we became better and better friends, for daily he paid me a visit; and if he obtained any information from me, I know I derived much from him, especially on the natural history of his extensive domains, of which he was a perfect proficient, often causing me to smile at the ability with which he could delineate peculiar characteristics of various animals.

When the subject was broached about my obtaining permission to hunt in his country, he quietly informed me that he had made up his mind to give that privilege to no traders or Boers, but that for a friend of Mr. Mackenzie's, a soldier, and one who did not desire to exterminate the game, he would stretch a point, and therefore I should have Massara velt, his own hunting-ground, and that he would send a chief of that people with me to collect the bushmen on my route.

Sunday came round in course of time, and I could have known the day from all others, by the air of rest that lay over Soshong. All was as peaceful as the village homes we knew in our youth on such occasions. Missionary labour may be slow in telling in South Africa, especially among the tribes so far to the north, but when our religion is represented by such painstaking, enduring men as Mr. Mackenzie and Mr. Hepburn, it is bound to succeed in the end.

I shall never forget my Sunday afternoon at Soshong. Mr. Mackenzie and Mr. Hepburn had held service among the natives in the morning, but intended having prayers and a short discourse at three o'clock in

their own house, for those Europeans who chose to come.

Not one of them did not come; and in the little parlour where worship was held, the presence of the Almighty might almost have been felt. In my early life I had regarded religion lightly, but when I looked upon half a dozen stalwart men, accustomed to every hardship and danger of life, our worthy pastor's children, and a few servants, giving their whole soul to what they were engaged in, I more forcibly felt than ever I did before, that there was a great God above us—One who merited our adoration and our love.

The prayer was earnest, and such as could have been desired—the address was strictly applicable to the occasion—there was no flowery language, there were no marvellous similes; it was exactly what was wanted, and brought peace to the listener's heart.

That was the most solemn Sunday I ever passed. No cant or hypocrisy was here—what I heard was an exhortation from an earnest, true, reflecting man, endeavouring to make his fellow-creatures feel the depth and height of religion, and the consolation that they could derive from it, although so far in a heathen land. As I have felt after visiting a graveyard or after visiting a church, so I felt when I left that room—that we ought not to live for our present life, but for that which is to come. When the hymn at the termination of the discourse was sung—"God is my Shepherd; I shall not want"—I again must repeat I was overcome with the conviction that I for one had been living for the present, and utterly regardless of the future—that great future in which all will be summoned to give account of their stewardship.

My poor mother used to say, "The prayer of the righteous availeth much." Dear, good soul! she believed it, and offered many a prayer for her recusant son. In youth I doubted it, in mature years I have pondered over it, but I now believe that she was right, and I was wrong.

The life of a missionary here is a very hard one; their employment is incessant, and long after I retired to my wagon to sleep, Mr. Mackenzie was still consuming the midnight oil. In the morning they require to be up to look after their milk cows, presently school commences, then breakfast, after which a number of sick and wounded will be found assembled on the verandah, some with the most hideous sores possible to imagine. After each is duly treated, school again, and so on till dark.

The Bechuanas are not an unhealthy people, but they meet with accidents in the chase, and in taking care of their cattle. At first I think they are prone to neglect their wounds, thus accounting for some of the ghastly sores they exhibit. My skill in medicine is not great, still it afforded me much pleasure to assist the worthy minister. That he is regarded, that both are, with great love by the people, there is no doubt. The number of sincere converts they have made I cannot of course state, but they are unquestionably numerous; and Kama, the king, I have no hesitation in saying, is as good a Christian, as upright and honourable a gentleman, as can be found in any community.

A friend of mine remarked, after the king had left us, "What a pity it is that he is not white!" Better, in my opinion, that he is as he is; he can do far more good as a black man than he ever would be able to accomplish as a white.

Mr. Mackenzie told me an amusing story in reference to an incident that lately occurred to Mr. Hepburn. He and Mr. Mackenzie were both trecking from Kuruman together, where they had been to attend the meeting of members of various religious associations. Their cattle had been without water for a couple of days when they reached the Notawaney, the bed of which, to their grief, they found perfectly dry.

Water must, if possible, be obtained, so they separated, the one going up the water-course, the other down, in the hope of finding a pool. Mr. Hepburn unsuccessfully had progressed about two miles when he spied some bushmen's huts; to them he directed his steps, in hope of learning where the desired *metsea* (Bechuana for water) could be obtained. On reaching these human habitations, he could see no one, so stooping low down to enable him to pass the diminutive doorway, he attempted to enter the nearest building. When he had almost accomplished the performance, in fact, got half way in, what was his surprise to observe, instead of human beings, a mature male and female lion sound asleep! Slowly and silently he withdrew, and, as he was unarmed, made a rapid retreat to the wagons.

It was an awkward position to be placed in, and one that required an unlimited amount of presence of mind. Another excellent story was told me here. The persons principally interested were some English gentlemen, among whom was a Mr. Glynn, the son of some city magnate, and, as will be seen, possessed of more money than pluck.

While on the velt shooting antelope they met another white hunter. As such meetings are very rare, and, I may add, very enjoyable, an arrangement was

made that the party of our countrymen should pay the hunters' camp a visit in the course of a day or two. However, days elapsed, and they did not come, thus their intended host got uneasy, and resolved to seek them out, and learn what was the cause of their not keeping their promise. On arrival at their camping-place he found them outspanned in the centre of a most formidable kraal they had erected, but no oxen or horses within sight. On hailing his friends, and entering into conversation with them, he learned that a day or two previously the lions had driven all their cattle off, and that even now an old mannikin was watching them, thus preventing their going out, even in search of their beasts.

Says the hunter, "You would not let a confounded lion keep you prisoned up, surely?"

"But he's an enormous brute."

"He is, is he; and where can he be found?" inquired the visitor.

"Oh, behind that bush; there, that one about a hundred yards off. You cannot see him now, but he's there, and has been there since the cattle were driven off," was the answer.

The hunter simply exclaimed, "I'll soon make him quit," and walked out of the kraal straight up to the bush in question. Behind it was a fine old lion asleep, but who got roused up by the intruder's approach, and before the poor beast could do his yawning, stretching, and taking the kinks out of his back, he was bowled over with a two-ounce bullet through the head. The best hunter in South Africa, in his time, was the narrator of this deed.

It has become popular to doubt the performances of Gordon Cumming. Lots of stick-in-the-mud, stay-at-

home sportsmen turn up their noses, and pronounce with the usual emphaticness characteristic of the breed, snob, "It's all an infernal lie." In this, as in many other things, they show their ignorance, and because they have not the courage to rival his performances, profess to disbelieve that they ever were done.

So frequently has this come under my attention at home, that I resolved to make particular inquiries at Soshong (the northern limit of his hunting-ground), into the truth of the most marvellous portions of his narrative. In this there was no difficulty, for still many men lived who hunted with him, and were eye-witnesses to nearly all the great deeds of the mighty hunter, and every incident that I could call to mind was emphatically confirmed by them.

One grey-haired old warrior said that "no white man ever come here like Gordon Cumming. When he heard the lion at night, the same as in the day, he went into the bush and shot him." This, doubtless, was exaggeration; but that he was a great hunter, and one of the bravest of the brave, there can be no question.

Life on the flat, or among the traders, I have not yet spoken of. To leave Soshong without doing so would be base ingratitude, for from one and all, from the highest to the lowest, I received the greatest kindness and hospitality. Moreover, to my surprise, I found them all educated men and gentlemen. True, there was one deserter, but many a gentleman has enlisted, and will, doubtless, to the end of time, and, as well as those more humbly born, sometimes desert.

Charlie ——, for I will not give his full name, was a character. He was short, well-made, and a consummate fop in reference to dress: nobody had shirts with

such wonderful patterns on the bosom and collar as he had ; his wristbands came farther over his hands, and more of his throat was exposed than any one else's in the community. Without saying that he was a boaster, he talked loud and emphatically—in fact, was exceedingly pompous and self-satisfied. But a most amusing change came over him, and the Charlie that was, ceased to be the Charlie of the future. Up to the date of this alteration, not a soul knew that he was a deserter, but imagined that he was a person of position trading for amusement, to collect curiosities, or by both means helping to defray a portion of his expenses.

One evening a stranger arrived at Soshong ; no one knew whence he came or whither he was going. He was on foot, and without baggage. But this mattered not : the South African trader does not ask his guests their means ; it is sufficient that they are white men, and as white men they are treated. Thus, the traveller was welcomed at the first house he called at, and became for the time being a member of the establishment. Soon he was introduced, and as it was evident that he was a man of education, he received invitations to visit the various members of the small community.

Now at Soshong exists a custom, doubtless not at all peculiar, of the residents assembling nightly at some house or other to play at cards, loo being generally the game. As the unknown was fond of cards, and apparently possessed plenty of money, he was a welcome guest at these little reunions.

Thus stood the state of affairs when Charlie made his second appearance in the Capital of Bamanwatto.

The unknown it would be well to describe. He

stood about five feet four, but if he had been straightened out would have been much taller; in his neck was a knot or twist of some kind that forced him to carry his head very much on one side, while to raise his eyes so as to look you straight in the face was evidently a great effort. His skin was the colour of parchment, and shrivelled as much as if that material had been soaked in water and exposed to a tropical sun to dry. But with all these deformities, he was well-read, intelligent, and evidently possessed of considerable knowledge of the world. If his head had been set on uprightly—and it was a fine head, as heads go—he would not by any means have been a bad specimen of the human family.

The first night he and Charlie met, the stranger appeared *distract*, deep in thought, and looked as if he were pondering over the past, and endeavouring to recall some incident of it. The second evening that they came together, Charlie was in unusually good spirits, told his raciest stories with great gusto, and boasted of his past exploits with much force. But whenever he narrated anything wonderful, anything about the world he knew and the grand folk in it, the stranger would twist his head upwards, fix his expressionless eyes upon him, and exclaim emphatically, "Bom-bom!"

For a length of time this extraordinary conduct on the part of the unknown was borne most patiently by him who had become the life and soul of the party; but when "bom-bom" became to be inevitably uttered every time he spoke, Charlie thought it was time to terminate such uncourteous, nay, rude, conduct.

"What do you mean, sir, by interrupting me?"

"Bom-bom!"

“ I ask you, sir, what do you mean by such unbearable insolence ? ”

“ Bom-bom ! ”

“ If you don't cease that confounded ‘ bom-bom ’ of yours, I'll pull your nose ! ”

“ Bom-bom ! ”

But scarcely had the last word been uttered, than Charlie had the objectionable person by the nose, and doubtless would have proceeded to further violence had we not interfered.

To say the least, it was plain that the unknown was the offender, so an explanation of his unaccountable conduct was demanded, and, nothing loth, was furnished.

“ A year or two since I lived at King William's Town, in the Colony. The regiment then stationed there gave a supper and ball, and I was employed to furnish the comestibles. Among other dishes were some roast ducks : no person partook of them ; of this I am certain, for I watched carefully how things progressed, paying particular attention to the consumption of the food.

“ At length the ladies and officers rose and left the table ; the ducks, untouched, were there at that moment. The bandsmen, who had been uninterruptedly employed during the early part of the evening, were now sent into the room to get some ale. The moment they retired I missed several of my ducks ; and as nobody was there to purloin them but the bandsmen, I at once went and complained to the commanding officer, and he ordered his people to be searched. But who would stick a roast duck in his pocket ? Besides their somewhat greasy condition, they are not a convenient shape or size to secrete about a regimental coat. The band

were all searched, and of course to no purpose ; but the leader, who knew more about these matters than I did, laid hold of the 'bom-bom' " (here Charlie wished to break loose and annihilate the speaker) "and turned it upside down. Out of it came my ducks. And that gentleman was the young man that played the 'bom-bom.' "

Here Charlie made another effort to escape those who held him; however, in this he was foiled. So, as he could not vent his wrath in that manner, he bade the company good-night, earnestly vociferating as he departed that it was all "a confounded lie."

Next morning Charlie was discovered to have trecked to the Kaminyani, where he was an especial favourite.

CHAPTER XXVII.

I LEAVE SOSHONG.

The Cattle at Soshong—Lake Bullock—Galloway-like Ox—Kaffir Ox—Mashoona Ox—How many of the Cattle lose their Tails—Kama's Horses—Queer Sheep—How they Fight—Five Strange Children—My Mare Ruby—Powl—My Goat becomes Food for a Hyæna—My Monkey returns to his Mates—My Mashoona and Macalaca People leave me—A Word for the Macalacas—My Departure from Soshong—Dilly-dallying of the Blacks—Kama's Cattle Kraals—Mapaney Tree—Bad Luck—Stuck in a River-bed—One of my Dogs Bolts—Birds charmed by a Snake—End of the Enchantment—Seruley Vley—I fall in with a German—We dine together—His Bullock's Stampede—The German loses a Saulted Horse—A Rest—A Glimpse at a Leopard—Greet and I part.

A FAVOURITE habit of mine, as I have said before, is to take my place in front of the mission-house and watch the traffic up and down the road. There are other objects here deserving of observation besides the natives.

First, then, I will mention the cattle. They are a queer mixed lot; no herd in Europe would be found to contain such a variety; they are of all colours, sizes, and shapes. On account of its size we will take the Lake bullock, an immense, ungainly, raw-boned creature; its bones are so prominent that it never appears fat. The head is coarse, and the dewlap very large; but the most remarkable point about it is the horns, which are enormous, beyond all conception in length, and stand out almost at right angles from the head. A pair I procured measured from tip to tip no less than nine feet two inches; and I have been assured that larger

are obtainable. For draft oxen, when the Great Thirst Land is likely to be traversed, they far excel all other breeds. They principally come from Lake N'gami and the land of the Baeanaana.

Another ox, generally black, large, and massive, in its proportions, will also be observed. It looks much like the hornless cattle of Galloway, in Scotland, with the exception that it is not without horns, but these appear to hang down and swing and shake about perfectly loose with every movement of the animal.

The ordinary Kaffir ox is abundantly represented, and is a type of animal very dissimilar from anything we have at home; its body is short and compact, while its legs are long, its neck very short, and possesses an embryo hump on its withers. These must not be confused with the Zulus, which are remarkable for their symmetry and well-bred appearance—at least, according to our ideas.

But the most beautiful of all is the Mashoona ox. In formation it is simply perfect; the body is massive and square, the head and horns symmetry itself, while its feet and limbs are perfection. They are almost invariably black, are excellent workers, with good tempers. That no person has undertaken the task of importing a few specimens of this race for the sake of improving our home-breed surprises me very much. To do so might be tedious, but not necessarily costly.

But last, though not least among this heterogeneous crowd, comes the Fatherland representative; doubtless in its veins is a large amount of European blood, but it is frequently perverse in its nature, and stands the want of water badly. It resembles an exaggerated Durham, and my Ackerman is not a bad sample of the breed.

The observer cannot help noticing how many of these cattle want their tails, some having been deprived of them so high up that only a rudimentary stump is left. There are two ways of accounting for this—hyænas and vaccination, the tail being the part chosen for inoculating against lung-sickness.

But, by Jove, do you hear that clatter? It must be a troop of cavalry coming up the kloof; no, it is only their chargers. These are the horses of King Kama, nearly a hundred in number, and all saulted. To one only skilled in English horseflesh they look rather a mixed lot, and so they are doubtlessly, still there is not one among them that has cost less than sixty pounds, many one hundred and twenty.

Of one thing you may be certain, all—with the exception of one or two antediluvians—can perform the most extraordinary journeys, although they know no other food than the grass of the velt. They are not fat nor yet lean, but in that kind of hard, serviceable condition a hunter gets towards the end of the season.

But having done with the horses, let us take a glance at the goats and sheep. The former resemble what may be seen every day at home, but the sheep—well, unless you were informed of it, you might imagine that they belonged to a *genus* only lately discovered. They are generally white with black heads, very tall, thin stilt-like legs, very large pendulous ears, no horns, hair instead of wool, and their tail—about the size of a small pillow, and not unlike it in shape—hangs down nearly to the hocks, having a queer diminutive termination of periwinkle form. They are both obstinate and pugnacious. I have watched two fight, which would probably have ultimately killed each other if they had

not been separated. The mutton they make when fat is excellent, equal, indeed, to any we have at home.

But here comes an interesting party, although of a different race ; they are five in number, and the oldest is not over seven years of age ; they are black as black can be, with woolly, flat-sided heads, the gauntest of legs and arms, with very protruding stomachs. They are children from the vicinity of Lake N'gami, purloined from their homes by the Boers, and rescued by Mr. Mackenzie. They are well fed now and taken care of, although it must cost good kind Mrs. Mackenzie no end of time and labour to keep them in clothes.

They are as merry a lot of young urchins as can well be found. See, there are four of them harnessed to a log of wood in imitation of oxen, while the fifth acts as driver, copying to a nicety their every action, even the absurdly conceited airs these worthies assume.

But for their protector having saved them they would never have known the joys of childhood. Yet some people say missionaries do no good ; before I came to the interior of South Africa I thought so too, but my belief now is exactly the reverse.

Aided by Mr. Mackenzie, I have tried everywhere to get a horse, and the only animal obtainable is one of his own, a five-years-old mare, but unfortunately unbroken. This nag is saulted, bred here, her sire and dam being both saulted. But as a horse I must have, for without one there would be no use going farther up the country, I decided to buy her. As I only hunt to keep the pot going one mount will suffice, although I should much have liked to possess two. As Ruby, for so I named her on account of her many excellent qualities, figures in all my future exploits, a

description of her must be given. She is fourteen hands two inches high, well made, has sound flat legs, powerful loins, and good barrel; in fact, but for being more massive, she is a good imitation of an English racehorse. Her colour is a dark iron-grey.

I expected to have some trouble in breaking her, but I found her as docile from the beginning as if she had been worked all her life. Her paces, which at first were somewhat rough, soon got made, and her mouth after two or three rides became perfect. At first I resolved to take her colt with me, but afterwards I changed my mind, as every panther and hyæna in the country through which I was about to pass would have deemed it a point of honour to kill it. Of course I anticipate some trouble in separating the mother and child, and it is rather bad to do so, but there is no alternative.

The new driver I have obtained is called Powl—I suppose Boer for Paul—he has been at the Lake and other distant parts, bears an indifferent character, but, as he is the only one available, I am obliged, “when necessity drives, needs must.”

I wished to replace my pets; for my late poor goat got run over the night we trecked from the Limpopo. It happened in this way:—A hyæna made a dash at her, and she tried to rush under the wagon, and in doing so a hind wheel went over her loins, and broke her back. The monkey deserted when at the Boer encampment, and was seen by Umganey hail-fellow-well-met with a number of his species in a grove of trees on the river-bank. He was recognised by the belt round his waist. But at Soshong I was unable to make up these losses. Although there were plenty of monkeys and baboons frequently to be seen among the rocks behind Mr.

Mackenzie's house, goats could be purchased, and I had not now spare people to drive an uneducated one along with the wagon till it got accustomed to follow.

My Mashoona and Macalaca people remained three or four days after my arrival here; but, having thoroughly rested, and become strong through the enjoyment of an abundance of food, they had started for the north with all their worldly goods upon their backs.

I was very sorry to lose them, and, poor fellows! they were in great grief when they bade me good-bye; for a rumour had reached them that Lubengulo, king of the Matabele, was putting all their countrymen to death who had dared to visit the Diamond-fields without his express permission. When such was the case, one would imagine that they would have remained where they were, or retraced their steps; and, although Mr. Mackenzie and myself both pointed this out to them, so great was their love of home and relatives, that they preferred running the risk to remaining longer away.

The Macalaca lad, the one who shot the ox, I should particularly have liked to keep with me; but such was not to be; the last I saw of them was their going up the kloof in single file. During the stay of these people with me—and they were constantly about the wagon—I never missed anything, although the Macalacas have the reputation of being addicted to pilfering.

At length the day of departure arrived. The whole community had done their utmost to induce me not to proceed farther without a companion, particularly as I did not speak the language of the people, but I would not be persuaded. What others had done I could do; if not, it would not be for want of trying. So the wheels were greased, new straps and yoke-keys put in

the place of old ones, and each ox furnished with a fresh reim. The cattle looked well when they were brought down; once more they were mobbed, and soon after in the yoke. "Powl, why don't you start?" I called out. "The guide not come yet, Bass," he answered. And in a moment after we were joined by a sturdy, tall Bechuana. The whip cracked, the well-known shout was given, and the wheels once more commenced to rumble on.

Many shakes of the hand, many kindly parting words, and once more alone, I am riding behind my wagon, and not with the lightest heart, for I have bidden adieu to kind friends, been the means of separating Ruby from her child, and enter a *terra incognita*.

For five miles we have to take the track pursued when coming into Bamanwatto, then it turns more to the east, and the road follows the edge of the line of hills. The scenery is very pretty; for the range is penetrated by numerous kloofs and glens, the sides of which are covered with trees, the camile-dorn being the most numerous represented.

The path, however, is very rough and stony, so much so that no other vehicle except a Cape wagon could possibly stand it. At seven miles from Soshong the road commences to turn more northerly, and soon after due north. As there is no water for thirty miles, we have to make as much way as we can before outspanning, to enable the cattle to drink at noon on the morrow.

Being resolved to maintain from the commencement the discipline and routine intended to be pursued during the coming journey, I was kept up all night trying to lick matters into shape.

Black people will always defer doing a thing to the last moment, and they evinced that such was now their

2 J. 8 of Black people -

intention ; but I would listen to no argument or reason to the contrary, and kept at them till all was put right. It is no use locking the stable when the horse is gone ; and, although the driver and guide assured me no lions had been seen there for five years, that was no reason why one might not turn up that very night.

At Bamanwatto, not over a year or two back, Mr. Hepburn lent Kama's brother a milk cow. It was sent with the other town cattle to pasture round the gardens in the vicinity, a place constantly traversed by persons going to and fro, as well as by women at work, and where no one dreamt a lion would be secreted ; but there the marauder was, and the reverend gentleman lost his cow. Like tigers in India, you never know where they may be, past experience has taught me this, so I trust I shall not be caught napping.

About noon next day we reached the watering-place ; it was a large pool in the dry bed of a river. Not many years back water also constantly flowed here, but, as at Soshong, it is rapidly disappearing. If this dying away of streams goes on long, what will become of the country ultimately ?

Here are Kama's chief cattle kraals, and the immense droves of oxen, sheep, and goats give one reason to believe that his Majesty the king is far from a poor man. The shepherds, who appeared to be very numerous, were all young men, and with one or two exceptions, perfectly naked. Their huts were only a thatching of straw, with the sides open. Each was armed with an assegai, which they not only use as a weapon, but apply to all the purposes for which other people would use knives. How they manage to run about through the thorns and briars I cannot under-

stand, unless the hide of the black man is much thicker than that of his white brother.

The mapaney-bush (*Bauhinia*) begins to become more prevalent. I noticed the natives plucking the leaves and licking them; this they do to remove a sweet gummy substance that is deposited there by an insect. The population have a queer superstition about the mapaney-tree—namely, that if you take shelter under it in a thunder-storm you are certain to get struck; whereas the meruley-tree is so much loved by the lightning, that it will not hurt it or the person it shades.

The temperature of the water out of curiosity I tested. It was 98° ; yet during the night the thermometer stood at 67° , sufficiently cool to make the blankets quite enjoyable.

We had a long and tedious treck next day; in fact, it commenced with bad luck, and when that happens, you are likely to have a succession of it. First, we stuck in a dry river with very steep sides, and lost upwards of an hour before we got extricated; and in doing so not less than six or seven yoke-keys were smashed. Then a dog that I had bought at Soshong, and looked as if he would become useful, was allowed to escape, when it turned on its heels and started for its old home. I attempted to catch it on horseback; but although I overtook the brute, it dodged and turned so that I could not lay hold of it. It seemed exactly to understand what to do to baffle me; down it would lie till I dismounted, but as soon as I reached the ground it was off again; thus, very much disgusted, I gave up the pursuit, and wished the money I had paid for it were again in my pocket.

Still we made progress, and the black basalt hills of

Bamanwatto were becoming gradually more and more indistinct.

Soon after four, I was attracted by a great number of birds hovering about a tree and uttering most plaintive notes. Although I approached quite close to them, they seemed to have no fear of my presence. At length I discovered the cause of their alarm: a large green tree-snake was stretched at length on a limb, its head raised off the branch eight or nine inches, while its eyes fairly glowed with excitement. Again and again a bird would go up close to the reptile's head, and hover in front of it; or another would dash wildly past it, almost brushing the enemy's nose with its wings. This certainly was a case of charming, for the birds seemed unable to go away; and it was only a matter of time for one or other to get within the striking distance of the enemy. So I gave the snake a charge of shot, as the best means of preventing it from carrying out its purpose. The fangs I inspected; but they did not appear to be poisonous. I should say it was of the species *Bucephalus viridis*.

Half an hour before sunset we reached Seruley Vley—a pretty camping-ground as ever was looked at. The water covers about two acres, and on its bosom, on the far side, float innumerable water-lilies, on which run about several surgeon-birds, or jacana, their long toes giving them such a width of support that they do so with the greatest facility. At the north end of the vley, all the extremities of the drooping limbs have attached to them one of the strange but beautifully-constructed nests of the weaver-bird, placed there to avoid their enemies, the snakes. It was a party of this family that were fluttering round the reptile lately killed.

On the eastern side of the vley is the camping or outspanning ground; beside it stands a very large tree of the same species as the boomslang on the Limpopo. Here, underneath its shade, I took my seat, awaiting anxiously the arrival of what Umganey was preparing for dinner, when several wild ducks swept past, as if desirous of alighting. I consequently got my gun, and waited for a shot. Soon the opportunity offered, and I winged a bird, which, fluttering, fell among the tall reeds. Certainly the light was failing, but I searched so carefully that I thought I ought to find it. I called some of the dogs to assist me, but they refused to come. At length in disgust I gave the matter up.

"Bass, dinner," had just sounded in my ears, when the distant crack of a whip was heard. "Another wagon, Bass, soon here," continued Umganey; and, true enough, another wagon came up.

Its owner, a German, came and greeted me. His name was Greet, and he was on his way to Bulwio, in Matabele Land. There is little standing on ceremony in this country, so he consented to become my guest. Dinner, therefore, was deferred till his cattle and horses were made snug for the night.

Soon the bullocks drank, and afterwards were being mobbed previously to tying up, their owner and myself assisting, when the whole lot stampeded, knocked me down, and very nearly did the same to my companion. As soon as I could pick myself up I ran for my gun, for I knew that tired cattle would not act so unless there was some wild animal in their vicinity; but I saw nothing. After a great deal of trouble the scared beasts were secured and tied to their yokes, and we passed a quiet and agreeable night.

Next morning at daybreak we were both up and ready to start, when my guide pointed out on the road the spoor of an immense lion. The presence of this beast was the cause doubtless why the dogs would not help me to find the wild duck, and the reason of the cattle stampeding.

We trecked together that day, and outspanned at Palapsey, spent a most restless and uncomfortable night in as ugly a situation as could be chosen, and the boys behaved very badly. One of my new friend's guaranteed saulted horses died a mile before we reached the halting-place of undoubted horse-sickness. I gave him a certificate to that effect, so that he might recover from the vendor the price he had paid for it.

Two years ago the tsetse fly was so bad here that the place was generally passed in the night. A Boer trader who neglected to take this precaution lost all his cattle in consequence.

The in other parts dry river has here two pools; game, consequently, is abundant in the neighbourhood, and it has the worst character possible, for the audacity of the *feræ naturæ* that have selected it for their home. Next day I hunted in the afternoon, and although I saw plenty of different species of antelopes I did not kill any.

We trecked all the succeeding night, with the exception of two or three hours, and reached Mahalapsi, a large shallow vley, by noon on the succeeding day.

The pasture in this neighbourhood was excellent, so we determined to give the oxen a rest; and as there were abundant indications of game in the vicinity, a hunt was resolved on, to take place next morning. This resulted in my killing a koodoo (*todo*, Bechuana) and a

diker-buck. I missed a giraffe, although within two hundred yards, but had to be satisfied with its loss, as the ground was too broken and irregular to ride over. Greet killed a stein-buck.

Next morning the guide came to me at earliest dawn and commenced imitating some animal. I was about to take my rifle, but he pointed to the smooth-bore and shot cartridges, so arming myself with it, as soon as day commenced to break we went down into a grove of mimosa trees. Guinea-fowls and francolins fairly swarmed in them. I shot as many of these birds as we could consume, and in following them up got some distance from the wagon. In retracing our steps along the side of a rocky ridge, a splendid leopard showed himself for several seconds, but before I replaced the shot with ball cartridge it was gone.

As a long treck without water was before us, Greet not expecting to find any till he reached Gouque, and I not till I came to some pits more than three days ahead, we started soon after midnight, and with short halts kept it up all the next day and night, and on the following morning crossed the dry bed of the Shasshi, from where my course went off to the right and his to the left. Over our deoch an' durass we drank that we should meet once more, our beverage being London stout—a valuable drink here—produced from his wagon.

Both, I believe, felt grieved at separating. The scene of our parting was wild in the extreme, a pass between a jumble of rocks composed of the brightest red sandstone. He had the best of it, however, for before him was a track, while I had to steer my way through a wilderness where wagon had probably never gone before.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

SURROUNDED BY DISAFFECTED SERVANTS.

Treachery of my Attendants—I am a Fat Cow—Never lose your Temper to a Kaffir—A Charming Spot—How an Irishman made a Fortune in the Kalahari—Difficulty of Hunting in the Lands of Kama and Sechelle—Beware of Fraudulent Devices to take you to good Hunting-ground—Visited by Bush-People—Improvvidence in the Matter of Drinking-Water—When to Value Water—Our *aqua pura*!—An Improvised Filter—Plenty of Snakes—Local Belief about Female Snakes.

As I saw the tent-cover of Greet's wagon disappear in its route northwards my thoughts were not the most enviable. Of course, when I left England I anticipated the kind of life I was about to enter into, but did not expect to do it alone; and, worse than all, I felt convinced that, excepting Umganey, I had bad and unreliable people about me.

Greet warned me of this, and used his utmost efforts to induce me to go on to Matabele Land with him and hunt there; but I had sketched my campaign, and was determined to stick to it, come good or bad. The following was a conversation heard by Mr. Greet between my people:—

Driver: "We should be happy."

Guide: "We should."

Driver: "It is a fat cow."

Guide: "Yes, it is a fat cow."

Driver: "And has plenty of milk."

Guide: "Yes, it has plenty of milk."

Driver : " And our king has given it us."

Guide : " Yes, he has given it us."

Driver : " It must be milked."

Guide : " It must be milked."

The reader will scarcely require to have it explained to him that I was the fat cow.

They might designate me what they chose—fat cow as well as anything else—but I was resolved they would find me the most difficult of any of the bovine family to reduce to submission that they had ever previously to deal with. I would abide my time ; be patient but watchful ; and, above all things, keep my temper. Nothing so delights a Kaffir as to be able to put a white man in a rage ; and another and quite as potent a reason that you should not give way is, that an angry excited man lays himself open to injury, where if he had been cool he could have avoided it.

That night, by the camp-fire, I placed new cartridges in my revolvers. The suspected characters were around me at the time, and I could note how they exchanged with each other looks of anything but approval.

Our next treck took us round the base of two large coppies covered with beautiful vegetation. Here I saw the first palm, also the wild fig, both of which continued to increase in numbers the farther we progressed. Numerous dry river-beds marred our course, and gave us much trouble in crossing their treacherous bottoms. In the evening we entered a most lovely park-like country, having more of the artificial than natural look about it. Although we have not yet come to water ; vegetation seems to flourish without it, for the grass is green and the foliage of the trees of a colour that denotes perfect health. Here I selected the most charming

natural site for a house; if it had been at home, say on the coast of Devonshire, it would have been worth a lot of money.

The only game seen were ostriches (*Impsey*, Bechuana), diker and stein buck. The first-mentioned would not allow me to come closer than about 500 yards, yet I fired some shots at them. The short Martini-Henry is not accurate enough for such long ranges.

I do not think any horse to be found in this part of Africa, even with a feather-weight on its back, could overtake an ostrich. If the ground were smooth and flat as a racecourse at home, and you had for your mount a good plater, doubtlessly you would succeed in such a performance.

An Irishman once came into the Kalahari and made a great deal of money by the following plan:—Having bought up seven or eight of the best saulted horses he could find, he procured an equal number of bush-boys of five or six stone in weight, whom he taught to ride. Thus equipped he started into the desert. An ostrich, in spite of all you can do, will go up-wind, so taking advantage of this he placed relays of horses about six miles apart along the course the birds were certain to take when pursued. To prevent the ostriches deviating to the right or left when they winded the human being hidden in its course, both rider and horse were abundantly smeared with the secretion of some of the wild animals the birds were familiar with. The first lad made running as fast as he could, the second took it up at the same break-neck pace, while the third seldom failed to run into the game. Two or three birds a day were thus frequently killed, and as the feathers of each cock are worth from £40 to £50, the business was a remune-

rative one. Mr. Riley tried to get velt from Kama on which to hunt in this manner, but the sage king politely but firmly declined. In fact, nowadays, unless persons have a proper introduction to the King of the Bechuanas, he will not permit any one to hunt in his country, or even to pass through it to hunt in the lands beyond.

There is, therefore, only another route open to the great elephant grounds, which passes through Sechelle's lands. He is just as particular as Kama. Any person, however, can go up the coast, and from there break into splendid shooting, but, on account of the tsetse fly, their horses, oxen, and dogs would all be dead or useless in a month.

Men who have a slight experience of this land—persons who probably have been in the employment of traders—come home and advertise to take parties to the great shooting lands. They have but to find persons willing to go with them, when the fraud will be discovered.

Any one might shoot on the north banks of the Limpopo, and on it find game of nearly all varieties—on rare occasions possibly elephants; but there their journey northward would terminate, so that after the expenditure of a considerable sum of money, the endurance of much fatigue and discomfort, they would probably have to return without accomplishing their purpose—the slaughter of an elephant.

Those whom Kama or Sechelle know and profess friendship for they will do anything to serve, but certainly they do not like Tom, Dick, or Harry disturbing the country, and making the game they do not kill wild. No one can blame them for this. The Duke of ——, or the Marquis of —— will not let any one who has a

thousand pounds to throw away make incursions into his grounds, and shoot or drive off the ornaments of his preserves.

I feel it a duty to mention this, as it may prevent many from woful disappointment, and a fruitless expenditure of much time and money.

As I have said, diker and stein-buck were plentiful in this neighbourhood; where the little beauties get water is a mystery. If not in the vicinity, they must travel nearly thirty miles for it, and supposing they only drink once in two days, their time, consequently, is pretty well occupied going to and fro.

Some wretched, half-starved bush-people visited the wagon that evening. At first they were very timid, but soon gained confidence. They brought several ostrich-eggs full of water to sell. My knowing it to be obtained by the sucking process prevented my availing myself of their offer. But my people were nothing loth to use it, so I made the hearts of these poor wanderers of the desert happy by giving them some beads and wire.

Although Ruby has had a considerable portion of the water in my fache, there are still remaining in it a couple of gallons, whereas the guide's, driver's, and foreloper's has long been empty. These people are so improvident that they require looking after like children, but as I am not an approver of carelessness, nor intend being nurse-tender to them, they may suffer for their want of forethought. Unfortunate Umganey has to be inconvenienced by their conduct—so blaming them, not him, I took compassion, and gave him more than one good drink.

To learn to value water, a person has but to come here.

Oh, for a glass of that pure liquid that tumbles down with merry laugh over our own hill-sides ! Champagne, Imperial Tokay, Johannisberg, all the choice wines of the world, would not in this region be at all to be compared with it.

The stuff we have to drink would anywhere else be deemed filth. It is full of animal life, decayed vegetable matter and excrement, yet it is all that can be obtained. Alum will not clear it, boiling makes it like pea-soup, and gives it a strong flavour of the animalculæ cooked in it, while the charcoal filters I brought from London are utterly useless, for the reason that they clog in no time, and refuse afterwards to permit the passage of a single drop of liquid.

The plan I adopted was to pour the water into a woollen stocking, and let it drip into a dish placed beneath ; it may have been a very inefficient filter, still it was the best I could improvise.

Next day we arrived at noon at a splendid outspanning-place, as far as scenery was concerned. The coppies were high, sometimes quite a thousand feet, and invariably covered with trees. The giant baobab here is to be found, the most wonderful of all vegetable productions.

We inspanned at an early hour, and passed over an immense plain, with trees in clumps scattered here and there. Quagga, many descriptions of antelopes, with ostriches, were numerous, but were left undisturbed, as all were occupied with the hope of reaching water as soon as possible. And, indeed, it was time we did so, for the poor oxen were suffering fearfully, old Ackerman especially indicating that much more of such hardship would be beyond his powers of endurance. This

would be a sad disaster, as I do not think I have another bullock that would treck as an after-ox.

During this part of the journey I saw more snakes than had been observed anywhere else. They were all of the same species—the ordinary puff-adder, bloated, horrible-looking, dirty-coloured reptiles, running in length from three to five feet. They are so much like the sand in colour that it is difficult to avoid treading on them, and their bite is said to be certain death. One the driver killed with his whip-stick was almost five feet long. It is certainly fortunate that nature has made them so sluggish.

There is a curious belief among the people here in reference to this reptile—the reader must accept it for what it is worth—namely, that the female only produces one brood, and in giving birth to them dies, as the young, having attained a sufficient age to enter the world, eat their way out to it through their parent's body. The driver of one of the Diamond-fields' coaches, a most intelligent coloured man, told me the same yarn. I asked him if he believed it. "Yes," he replied, "for I have seen it." He further went on to state that he heard a snake crying from the great pain it was enduring; he went to the spot, and found a female puff-adder being delivered in the novel manner mentioned.

The story current in some parts of the country at home, that adders, when they think their young in danger, swallow them, is certainly as strange and as worthy of belief as the other.

At last we reached the looked-for camping-ground. Our guide gave a wild shrill yell, and as with the followers of Roderick Dhu, each rock, bush, or bunch of reeds produced a Massara bushman.

CHAPTER XXIX.

ADVENTURE WITH A LEOPARD.

Washing, Mending, &c.—An Expected Row—Outspanned in a Nasty Place—The Attendants crowd to my Fire—Ordered to Light their own Fires—Rebellious Spirits—The Scoundrels leave me *en masse*—A Tedious Night—A Visit to my Cattle—Splendid Sunrises—Massaras Tracking—In Presence of Game—Zebra wounded—A Charge—Cruel Work—Out for a Run—A Leopard Hit—Attacked by the Dogs—Macguire comes to Grief—The Beast bites the Dust—Buffaloes and Leopards—Varieties of the African Leopard—Arguments in Support of my Theory—Meruley Tree—A Black Mamba.

HERE we rested for several days. I went in for washing, mending, laying out fresh ammunition, cleaning guns, &c. &c.—for in two days' journey we would be in the veritable game country, until when I determined to rest.

To put all in good temper I bought several goats for a cup of gunpowder each, and one was slaughtered daily. This was not absolutely necessary, for there was plenty of game about, but I had an unaccountable longing for the meat of tame animals.

During this holiday a most obvious improvement in the appearance of the oxen and mare took place—a good indication that they still had some work in them. When we renewed the journey, the first three trecks were accomplished comfortably, the fourth not so, for I have had a most disagreeable row with my attendants; the undoubted cause of the difficulty is to be attributed to the guide, driver, and foreloper. The Massaras were simply tools in their hands.

We had trecked all day without water, and although the cattle scarcely got two hours out of the yoke, our progress was not what it should have been. The reason of this was that we lost two hours by sticking in a dry river-bed. At length it commenced to get dark; but as the guide did not propose it, I said nothing about halting; thus we toiled on till the Bechuana, who was leading us, thought proper to give the order to outspan.

I did not like the place, for it was in the middle of an immense bed of reeds, and of all places we had passed just the one to harbour lions. However, I resolved to keep good fires, remain on watch all night, trust in Providence, and keep my powder dry.

Soon Umganey had my fire going, and all the people commenced to crowd round it, without indicating the slightest intention of lighting one for themselves, or the one in front of the leading cattle. I remonstrated at this neglect; but although I set the example of going into the reeds and dragging in branch after branch, the others showed not the slightest disposition to do as they were ordered. The making and keeping up the front fire is the duty of the foreloper, and as this worthy was paid by me for his services, I got hold of him, and insisted on his attending to his work. After some loss of time, he lit a little trifling bit of a fire, and came back to mine to talk scandal, smoke, and make himself generally comfortable, and obnoxiously conspicuous to myself. Again I insisted on his keeping up his fire; at first he refused to do so, but I suppose thinking that I was not to be played with, went and put a few more sticks upon it. As soon as the foreloper had gone, I resolved that the guide and driver should make their fires, and go and sit by them with the crew of Massaras,

whom I did not choose to have at mine, as they smelt so abominably strong. But all I could say or do would not induce them to attend to my instructions. Powl spoke English sufficiently to thoroughly comprehend what I required to be done. Moreover, Mr. Mackenzie had explained to all the delinquents, before they left Bamanwatto, that the three fires were to be lighted nightly, no matter where we were, in fact, that it was a duty never on any pretence whatever to be neglected.

Naturally I became angry at my driver's disobedience, and let him know that when he got back to Bamanwatto that I would bring him and the guide before the king.

Still all was of no avail ; so there were only two fires going, thus leaving the right side of the wagon entirely unprotected. At length I thought I would force the mutinous scoundrels away from mine, and thus compel them to light one for themselves ; but, instead of doing this, they arose *en masse*, led by the driver, guide, and foreloper, and walked off into the velt. I knew I was in a most disagreeable position, but powerless to do anything ; so Umganey and I did the best we could all night to keep the fires up, and to obtain wood we had frequently to go a quarter of a mile into the open. It was one of the most tedious nights I ever spent, and seemed to be interminable. At length the day broke, and I was truly thankful that when it did so I had not to record a loss.

My attention has not been so much directed to the bullocks as formerly ; for, as they are especially under the driver's care, and I am commencing thoroughly to dislike him, I keep away from his charges. But this morning I had to assist in untying them. Dear old

Swartland and Buffle knew me as of old, but I think Poonah did not, for he gave me a kick on the shin of the left leg, that caused me great pain, and made me quite lame. When hobbling about, wondering what I should do with no one but Umganey to assist, the recusant crew came back, laughing and joking as if nothing had happened, and resumed their duties.

The sunrises in these regions are truly beautiful—in no other part of the earth have I ever seen them so worthy of unlimited admiration; the rarefied atmosphere of these table-lands is doubtless the cause. At break of day I always rise, and thus never miss a chance of seeing the great luminary take his first peep over the eastern horizon, and this morning was one of the grandest, most magnificent dawns that mortal ever witnessed. A few flaky, fire-burnished clouds hovered over the east after daylight commenced, slowly these ascended towards the zenith, and were replaced by those of a dark purple, the edges of which were margined by a thread of gold, which reflected from their centre every shade—from deepest orange to blood-colour. Such were the advance-guard of great Sol; but round his majesty came forth a different escort—gay as the dresses of a Watteau picture or court pageant when king and queen hold high revel. Indeed, they were gayer; for man hath not yet conceived, nor in his experience yet learned to produce, such lights and shades as waited like satellites upon the wondrous luminary, as he ascended farther and farther into the sky—a sky you could gaze into, as one could into eternity—without bounds, without limits, without end.

Game was heard round the encampment all night, so that my attendants concluded that we were about to have a great day's sport.

After having my coffee I started. Three Massaras were my companions; they were all small active fellows, one being old, the others young. We crossed the open velt, and entered a wood. Here we discovered plenty of spoor, which was not fresh enough to encourage pursuit. Pushing on again, we traversed another plain, and again our path led into timber land. Soon we found the trail of giraffe, a wondrous track, and more like the tread of a man in a loose-fitting slipper, which had a coarse, deep seam up the middle. After following this for an hour, we crossed the spoor of zebra; for this animal has taken the place of the quagga and Burchell's zebra, which occupies the plains farther to the south. For a quarter of an hour the Massaras displayed their skill and perseverance as trackers. Not at a walk did they follow the game, but at a run, so swift that they kept Ruby at a good round trot, and so unerring that not for a moment did they appear at fault. This led us from one cover to another, from open land to where the underbrush became so thick that fifty yards could not be seen ahead. Here they stopped, picked up a few twigs and broken leaves, cautioned me to remain silent where I was, while they stole away in the most mysterious manner.

Wonderful fellows are these bushmen—they rival the snake in its subtlety, the eagle in its power of sight. Where are they now? I might well ask; for, as far as evidence of human creatures being in my vicinity goes, I might as well have been at the North Pole, or in the centre of the sand-bound Sahara.

At length one, in a moment afterwards the others, returned to me; their appearance was as unexpected as if they had been shot up from the bosom of the earth.

The elder took the bridle of my mare, and, followed by the others, we made a short *détour*; at a signal I dismounted, walked fifty yards, and before me, not seventy paces off, were forty or more of the beautiful game feeding. So conscious were they of their security, that not a head was raised from the inviting leaves on which they browsed.

I felt it was a shame to destroy the harmony of the picture—to awake the still, placid scene by the report of the deadly rifle. Sooner than fire, I could have gazed on and on till all the animal life had passed away like a dissolving scene. But my people must have food: to give way to my feelings, and refuse to commit slaughter, would cause them all to desert, and leave me without the power of supplying the necessities of life.

I singled out a victim; she was a beautiful mare, with hind-quarters so round and strong that she might have been mistaken for a pampered brewer's horse. I wished to save the unfortunate pain, so took most careful aim; but at the moment I pressed the trigger she moved, and the ball lodged rather too far back. Still, down she fell, and struggled for a long time unsuccessfully to regain her legs.

In the meantime, all the herd trotted round and round her, gazing with sympathy upon her prostrate condition, and expressing wonder in their eyes at what could be the cause of her disaster.

I might have shot now, not one, but half a dozen, and my Massaras in a most unequivocal manner protested against my apathy. Still I was not to be moved, on the ground there was meat and enough; so I would not have taken the life of another, under any circumstances that could be urged.

Approaching the struggling victim, its comrades fled. I would here have delivered a final shot, but my attendants were before me, and buried their assegais in its marvellously beautiful flanks; but this attack seemed to produce new vitality, for the zebra rose, rushed headlong with open mouth at me—which charge I avoided by springing behind a tree—and disappeared into the forest. For two hours my attendants followed her spoor; at length we overtook the victim, sick in body, and powerless to go farther. A second shot brought her down, a mass of inanimate matter. It was cruel work from beginning to end, and, gentle reader, believe me, I was unwillingly the assassin.

The vultures swooped down from their home in the distant skies; soon every tree was loaded with them, and I felt I had done an evil deed when I had fired the shot that was to provide these foul feeders with a meal.

By breakfast-time I was home, spent an idle day about camp, and at three in the afternoon was ready to get into the saddle. I did not wish to kill game, but to see it. Crossing an adjoining watercourse, we entered a broad velt: all the dogs were with me, and evidently anxious for a run. Little Porty, an abbreviation for Portobello in Scotland, where she had been born—a present from the sincere, earnest missionary of Bamanwatto—barked and otherwise expressed her pleasure, within dangerous proximity of Ruby's fore-feet. The stein-buck and the diker-buck broke from their retreats, and scampered off on fleet limbs to sanctuaries where they would be safe from further disturbance, and the dogs heeded them not, for they were too swift of foot.

The plain that we were traversing now was very flat and smooth, with but a sparse covering of the most

diminutive bushes on it: it looked as if nothing larger than a meer-cat could have found shelter upon its surface from the human eye; but the large *felidæ* know how to secrete themselves, for nature has presented them with a coat admirably suited for such a purpose.

With a slack rein I rode; the dogs were clustered around me, for the heat of the afternoon and want of water had commenced to tell upon them, when up sprang the largest leopard that I had ever seen, and at an easy canter, grunting at every stride it took, made for a few scattered trees.

The appearance of the game was so sudden, that it was some moments before I left the saddle, and when I got ready to shoot, the dogs were between me and the object of my aim. At length I got a clear shot, and fired; the bullet ricocheted under the leopard's feet, but in doing so hit some part of its body. However, giving no more evidence of its mishap than a shorter and more savage growl, as well as an acceleration of speed, it pursued its course as heretofore. By this time the dogs were crowding it, but none dare lay hold, for such an act of temerity would have insured instant death.

Soon the trees were reached; but instead of the leopard taking shelter in them, it turned round on the dogs, and the pack scattered like chaff before the wind. I approached, and got off my horse, having taken my double gun in place of the lately-discharged single-barrelled rifle. To my surprise, none of the bushmen would go closer. The dogs, owing to my presence, became more and more bold and clamorous; one cur that I had picked up at Hartebeestfontein, near Klerksdorp, particularly distinguished himself; but his

prowess cost him dear, for the now thoroughly enraged cat made a dash forward, and with a sweep of her paw gave Macguire such wounds that he could scarcely crawl from the scene of the accident. If this continued longer, I clearly saw that not one of my curs would be left, so I advanced to get a clear shot, and so terminate the matter. This was difficult, as the dogs always kept between me and the game, but I continued to approach closer and closer. However, the panther had singled me for its next victim; with a couple of bounds it cleared the yelping hounds, and in a moment would have been on me, but that a snap shot stopped it in its charge; as, maimed and incapacitated for further injury, it bit and clawed the dust, I gave it a second barrel at a short range, and thus ended the *fracas*.

With the exception of the buffalo, this is the most dangerous animal that can be encountered: its activity is surprising, and its vitality unequalled. Moreover, it exceeds all other animals by its audacity at night in approaching an encampment, when dogs are its favourite prey. Horses also are among its principal victims, especially colts, and many are the inhabitants of Soshong who have justly to complain of the serious damage they have suffered at its hands.

Rocks and coppies are the favourite resort of the leopard: never before or since have I found it on the open velt. The animal just killed was as large as a two-year-old lion cub, exceedingly high on its legs, and very light in the body—more resembling my old friend, the hunting-leopard, or cheetah, of India, than any of the species I have previously met in Africa. Its body was beautifully marked, each primrose having a clearly-defined yellow centre.

I am convinced that in Africa there are three distinct species of leopard, the first thick and massive about the body, like a well-fed domestic cat, yet low in the shoulders, and light in the limb. The next stands taller, has coarse hair, and is very imperfect in its markings; the head is narrower and more pointed, while the limbs are stronger built and evidently more calculated for speed than those in the first mentioned. The last, an example of which I have just slain, stands high on its legs, possesses a beautiful and regularly-marked skin, and limbs that are really extraordinary in their size and power, while the tail is shorter than in what I claim to be other species. Since my return home I have spoken to Mr. Bartlett, the well-known naturalist and superintendent of the Zoological Gardens concerning this subject, but he apparently differed from me.

Of the dog family we have acknowledged different species. Thus the wolf, the Eskimo dog, and what is familiarly known as the Pomeranian, are very much alike, different in size, it is true, yet no one would assert they are the same species. Again, the pointer, the fox-hound, and the beagle, how closely do they resemble each other, yet are as widely different as possible! No one denies them the right of belonging to different species, yet naturalists are prone to place all leopards in one species, although marked in formation of body as differently one from the other as any of the dogs.

On my return to camp I saw my first harris-buck, but as day was waning, and we did not require meat, I did not attempt a stalk.

To-morrow we treck into a famous buffalo country, margining a river, tributary of the Chabagi, and if my

Massara speak true, with lions so fierce that they will drive the intruder out of the velt. I am prepared to risk this, and can only say that if they succeed they must be a different kind from any I have met before.

A tree that I have noticed before, but paid little attention to, now becomes abundant—it is the meruley. Among the vegetable kingdom of this part of the earth it is one of the most beautiful; here it is to the landscape what the birch is to American scenery—the queen of the forest.

Its height is seldom above sixty feet, but the stem is straight, and covered with a smooth, clean bark, not unlike our ash. The leaves are a very dark green, and in shape remind one strongly of the walnut. As a rule, it does not stand crowded in with other trees, but in openings, where it has plenty of breathing-space; it produces a fruit about the size of a husked walnut, covered with a thick fleshy skin, inside of which is a very large stone, not unlike that of the peach. When ripe the skin of the fruit becomes yellow, and soon after falls. It is then delicious, but unfortunately it requires a very great number to satisfy the palate, for, like all these wild fruits, the stone is so large that there is but a small portion of edible part. Possibly, by cultivation, this might be altered. The flavour is that of an acidulated drop—the desirable combination of sweet and sour.

Nearly all the wild beasts eat them, the elephant particularly, who will get his forehead against the trunk of the meruley, and then, bringing his enormous weight and power into action, shake down a sufficient quantity of the fruit to afford him, if not a meal, at least a very pleasant dessert.

A black mamba—a description of snake common in

Natal, and reported to be very deadly—I killed to-day. It was coiled up among a clump of mapaney bushes, and had just made a meal of some young birds, in consequence it was more sluggish than this active reptile generally is.

The inhabitants of Natal affirm that the mamba will chase you: this I doubt; at the same time I believe that if you happen to be between it and its retreat it will not turn to either side to avoid you.

CHAPTER XXX.

HUNTING AFTER BIG GAME.

Mashoona Rice—Elephants—A Holiday upset—Ruby willing—Hints about Treatment of Horses—Charge of Buffaloes—Fate of the Bush-people—Danger of Buffaloes—A Tusker brought to Grief—A Pugnacious Elephant—Seemingly he won't Die—Killed at Last—The Guide's Success—He Shoots a Rhinoceros—Charged by the Brute—A Heavy Kick and Shot—Bullock used as a Charger—Experiments to ride him—Another Shot at Buffaloes—A Match for the Lion—Running Down an Eland—How it is Done—Damoiselle Cranes—Massara Bushmen—Our Line of March—Man with Three Wives—The Youngest Wife—Her Speed—Her Favourite Delicacy—Her Visits—Bush-people's Appreciation of Snuff—An Excellent Vegetable—The Probable Fate of the Massaras—My Levée of Sick Natives—How I manage to prescribe for them.

I WAS sitting at breakfast, and a very good one it was, for I had curried stein-buck and some admirable Mashoona rice—the finest rice I have ever eaten—and as we had plenty of meat in the camp, I had resolved to take a holiday. Ruby had eaten her mealies, and the dogs had had their grub, and everything looked as if there were no probability of the ordinary routine of life being disturbed, when that fellow Umganey, whom I like so much, came rushing up with the news that there were elephants close by.

“Where and how did you find out this?” I inquired.

“From a Massara—he see them this morning,” was the answer.

So there was nothing for it but to have Ruby driven up and saddled, and go in pursuit, thus giving up my intended day of rest for one of more than ordinary toil.

I had determined to have a holiday, and thus give the mare a holiday too, but how ruthlessly was it destroyed! I can safely assert that I wished that the elephants had been at Jericho instead of feeding in proximity to the camp.

But ivory was money, and money was wanted, obtaining possession of which is a disease that many besides myself are frequently seized with; so I laid aside my pipe, pulled myself together, and assumed a look so like business that if an observer had gazed upon me he would have thought that to slay elephants was the sole ambition of my life, and that to know they were within access, the delight of my heart would be to jump into the saddle and rush off *instantly*. Ay, ay, we are all deceitful creatures. How many go to church because they think it looks respectable?

The little mare was willing; she came up to the wagon at a high, jaunty trot, stuck her nose into my buckets and pans to find where the mealies had been deposited—for it was ever my habit to indulge her when she was brought to me—and not finding what she wanted, looked in my face so pleadingly that I felt ashamed of my forgetfulness—in fact, as if I had told a premeditated lie, and been detected in doing so.

But to remedy my forgetfulness was easy, so I put a handful or two on the top of the facheys while I proceeded to tighten the girths. Never did the little pet appear so fit to go; she was as buoyant as a cork in body and spirit, so when I threw my leg over her, I felt that she was able to accomplish aught that was in the power of horseflesh. Let me impart a secret—possibly I may be laughed at for calling it so—never tease a horse by tickling or otherwise, for although at first it may

resent it with apparent friendliness, in the end it will with vice. If they come to you for grain at an hour they are in the habit of receiving it, do not disappoint them. Of course there are old stagers of garrons who have been spoiled by their previous owners, and whom all the coaxing in the world will not recall to virtuous courses, but with a young one it is different; treat it kindly and consistently, and it will reciprocate in the same manner.

The spoor was soon found, and we followed it up briskly. There was no doubt the elephants were not far ahead, and momentarily I expected to be in sight of them, when five buffaloes, who seemed to drop from the heavens, for they had not been seen before, charged right into our party. Ruby sprung forward, jumped over an intervening bush, and thus in a moment placed me in safety; but when I turned round to look at my bush-people, one was finishing a somersault in the air, another hanging by his hands from a limb, his feet not a foot above a buffalo's head, who was madly but ineffectually charging backwards and forwards at them. The poor fellow had not strength to pull himself up, but simply to hold on, and, of course, in time must have succumbed and dropped in front of his foe, but I made a good shot off the mare's back, and placed a two-ounce bullet exactly in the proper place behind the shoulder. Slowly, and uttering a piteous complaint for being deprived of life, it sunk down and died directly under the limbs of the climbing savage.

Blow the buffaloes! They are the most dangerous beasts on the whole velt, for they are as cunning as a pet fox, as stealthy as a cat, almost as swift as a horse, and possess power to lift a house, or, at any rate, a shanty.

Again, they never know when they are beaten—frequently you may riddle them with bullets, and they seem still to have a charge in them, and if a final shot takes away that power, they will sink down and groan out a remonstrance at the treatment they have received.

However, I soon got my scattered forces assembled, for none had received very serious injury, and *en avant* was the cry. In three miles we overtook the herd. One of them was a splendid tusker, and through proper management and care I succeeded in giving him the stern shot. His travelling days I saw were then over. So I singled out another, and tried to treat him in the same cavalier manner, but he was the most pugnacious, wide-awake brute I ever came across. First, when I was about to pull the trigger, he turned almost completely round, and charged so persistently, that if the little mare had not known what she was about, and been on her guard, we must have come to grief, for the long-reaching trot of elephants takes them far more rapidly over the ground than any one unacquainted with them would believe. Again and again I went within thirty yards to fire, but the brute would not give me a chance to pick out a vital place, for the head was always towards me, and the instant I halted to shoot was the signal for a charge.

The mare was as cool and self-possessed as ever she was in her life. The moment I dropped the reins on her withers she stood, and without guidance, as soon as the shot was fired, avoided the irate animal's attack.

I thought this a good opportunity for trying the head-shot I had practised in the East, although the distance was long. Crack went my right barrel over Ruby's ears. The ball hit just above the junction of the trunk with the forehead. Down came the game, but

only to his knees, and in an instant after was on his pins, and as active and pugnacious as ever.

Reloading my discharged barrel, I tried if the left would be more successful, but not a bit of it. The quarry got it almost in the centre of the forehead, the result of which was not at all satisfactory, for it provoked the most wicked charge that I had yet sustained.

Coming to the conclusion that I was fooling away my time and ammunition, and putting the plucky beast to unnecessary pain, I selected the knee, for I could not prevent the animal facing me, and at the first fire brought it down, finishing the business by placing a second bullet between the root of the ear and the eye.

William, my Bechuana guide, also killed a very large tusker; in fact, the best that fell that day. By three I was back in camp, and the people sent off to bring in the ivory and meat.

A little before sunset the guide, against my wishes, shot a rhinoceros. It was within sight of the wagon for upwards of an hour, and I was having a most careful survey of its manner through my field-glass, when he discovered it, and in spite of all I could say, go he would. We had such a quantity of meat already that it was really committing a positive sin to take any more animal life, so I was very nearly having a row with the fellow to enforce my orders. However, I thought it was better to avoid a disturbance with so valuable a servant. His disobedience, nevertheless, very nearly cost him dear, for at the first shot he only wounded the beast, which charged at the smoke, winded him, and coursed him in grand style over the velt. At length he managed to dodge, and while the vicious beast was poking about the bushes looking for its late foe, the guide put in a second

shot, but with no better success. Again he was hunted, and in his excitement and fear made straight for the encampment. At one moment I thought the brute had him, but a quick turn saved his bacon. At this moment all the dogs came up, and the rhinoceros's attention became fully occupied with the noisy pack. To my annoyance the infuriated beast a second time directed its steps towards us, so to avoid it running amuck through my property, which it doubtlessly would have done, I took my four-bore, loaded with ten drams of powder, availed myself of the shelter of some thick mapaney brush and an ant-hill, and took aim.

I pressed the trigger, and, my goodness ! I received a blow on the shoulder that completely floored me, the gun at the same time springing out of my hand, and tearing a couple of inches of skin off the inside of my finger. As for the game, it never knew how it had been converted into meat. After this exploit I kept that gun for the use of friends and refractory servants who were fond of sport, and it certainly afforded this in more ways than one.

Next morning I bought a beautiful little bullock for an old musket. The Bechuana and Massara constantly use oxen for riding, so I thought I would convert him into a charger. But with the caution characteristic of my countrymen, I preferred seeing another on his back to making the first attempt myself. It was Powl's work to handle the cattle, so I told him to mount ; he did so, but the moment the bullock was let loose off it went over the velt, bucking most furiously, and pitched Mr. Driver a most beautiful somersault. I now ordered the foreloper to get on. Nothing loth, he did so, and made a good effort to keep his seat, but ultimately failed, and

became acquainted with the dust. Those who had not mounted seemed to think that the unsuccessful candidates for equitation honours were duffers, so in rotation, even to that fat goose Umganey, they got on the ox, and were as rapidly unseated. When unmounted the bullock was as quiet and gentle as an old cow; get on his back and he appeared to go crazy. It was one of the most amusing episodes I had witnessed for a long time; in fact, so much so that I brought on a violent headache by giving way to excessive laughter.

There are to-night at least seventy or eighty bush-people around the fires; where they all come from is a marvel to me, for the country seems to be entirely uninhabited, and nowhere will you find evidence of man's presence.

The country about here is most beautiful, yet unlike anything I have ever seen, for every mile or less out of the flat velt rise coppies, some to the elevation of a hundred feet, some to double that height, and all are clothed with vegetation to the summit, although there appears to be no soil to give it nourishment. On the plains the trees are not numerous, standing about a hundred yards apart, with immense baobabs at almost every quarter of a mile. The underbrush is very scant, what there is being mapaney.

While traversing this plain I commenced to think what a dreadful place it would be to get lost in, for not only did all the coppies look alike, but each tree appeared a fac-simile of the other.

Spoor of game was very abundant, yet so far we had seen none, when one of the Massara touched me gently on the hand and pointed to the left. Beneath a

meruley tree stood several buffaloes. I got off the mare, made a very cautious stalk to the back of a rock; from there I was within easy shooting distance. I singled out a fine fat sleek cow, and broke her shoulder with the first barrel; the second shot, which was fired at short range, terminated the matter. To my grief, when inspecting the carcass, I found her udder full of milk, so doubtless she had a calf hid somewhere in the vicinity. Poor little beggar! without its dam it would be certain before long to be run down by the hyænas.

It is a strange fact that all the game hide away their young when they have not attained sufficient age to follow, while the parent feeds round about, ever keeping a watchful eye that no beast of prey comes near the resting-place of her child.

Although many buffaloes are doubtlessly killed by lions, yet my belief is that where a mature bull or cow is the victim, it takes two or three to accomplish their purpose. A single lion would probably be killed if he attempted to take a calf in presence of its mother.

On my way home we found a flock of elands, the largest of all the antelopes. As Ruby was fresh and anxious for a gallop, I resolved to try the experiment of driving one to the wagon. This is easily done by those experienced in this antelope's pursuit, and the same can be accomplished with the giraffe. The method is to force the running from the beginning, and then cause the game to go beyond its power, and thus become pumped, when you have only to ride quietly behind, turning it to the left or right as required.

I picked out the fattest of the herd, and although it had three hundred yards' start, was alongside the quarry in little over half a mile. The poor eland tried

its utmost to get some more speed out of itself, but found it was no use, but in doing so broke from its trot—the only pace it uses when pursued, unless much exhausted—and commenced a floundering gallop; very little of this sufficed to thoroughly wear it out. Poor thing! it looked at me with such pleading eyes that I was very nearly leaving it; but at the wagon meat was required, for the buffalo was so far off we could not take more of its flesh than would make a light load for my attendants.

If this eland had been accustomed to be driven all its life, had it been a demure old milk cow, it could not have behaved better. Thank goodness! I was spared the task of butcher, for the guide was only too glad to relieve me of such a disagreeable job.

This evening, soon after sunset, I witnessed an extraordinary scene. Hearing a great many birds calling at some distance, I looked up into the heavens, and as high as they could possibly be and remain within sight, were thousands and thousands of large birds circling round. They were too far off for me to distinguish what they were at first, but after a few minutes, as if with one accord, they all closed their wings and swooped down to the earth with the most remarkable velocity, and lit upon the velt within a quarter of a mile of the wagon, their numbers being so great that they covered several acres. They were damoiselle cranes.

These Massara bushmen are not the least like the bush-people of the south, for many are tall, handsome, well-made men, with features quite the reverse of the negro type, and do not speak with a click. In fact, many of them possess very animated, intelligent, and agreeable

features. They are capable of enduring much fatigue, and possess great courage in the chase, all game, from the largest to the smallest, falling before their spears or arrows. Still they are not a warlike race, and very much dread the Matabeles.

It is worth while to see the line of march, women, children, and men all spread out, and on the *qui vive* for anything that can be picked up, from a tortoise to a meer-cat. There is one man who has three wives—the youngest one is not more than fifteen, and only lately married, and as an elder wife has two bairns, this young thing has to carry one of them, and that the bigger. I am quite certain from her look that she does not like the occupation, and I should say small blame to her.

She has a beautiful figure and very pretty face, and as she has only a piece of caross fastened to her loins, there is no deception possible. But for her complexion, a description of coffee-colour, I feel convinced that if she were dressed *à la mode* she would be a *belle*. You should see her run: a jackal jumps up, after it rush the dogs, down goes the baby dump off her back in an instant, no matter whether into thorns or not, and like a sky-rocket she is in pursuit, to save the hide from being torn by the dogs; yes, and the carcase too for that matter, for jackal is deemed a great delicacy among them.

She is a mischievous young lady too. The large caterpillars, immense things longer than your middle finger, and beautifully marked with purple and green spots along the side, are deemed by the Massara great delicacies; they eat them *au naturel* or parched, the latter being the favourite method. Having found a quantity of them, she brought me some alive, and when she discovered that I had even repugnance to taking them in

my hand, she commenced eating them one by one in front of me. I shook my head, and showed by my gestures that I disliked exceedingly to see the *belle* of the party guilty of such unladylike conduct, so ever after when she chanced to find any caterpillars she would come close to me, hold the wriggling thing aloft between her finger and thumb, and then place it in her mouth.

As a proof of her speed and power of endurance, I will mention a fact that will rather astonish our home-bred girls. I fired at, and mortally wounded, a giraffe, still it had vitality to go over two miles at a very smart pace. Of course I started in pursuit, Ruby doing about a three-quarter gallop. At the moment this Massara woman happened to be by my side, so she seized hold of the mare's long tail, and assisted by that ran the entire distance.

In the morning she frequently pays me a visit, and out of courtesy I tell Umganey to give her either some sugar, some snuff, or a piece of tobacco. The first she eats at once, making wonderful pantomimic expressions to indicate the pleasure she is enjoying, the two other articles she takes to her old husband, and divides the spoils evenly with him. Snuff is a thing all these people are wonderfully fond of, men and women alike, and a quarter of an ounce of it would be deemed ample recompence for a day's labour. It is a pity they smell so, and yet they do not appear dirty. I expect it must arise from their living so much upon animal diet.

There is an excellent vegetable found on these velts; its name I do not know, but it is about the size of a large Swede turnip; the skin is leathery and soft, but when broken a quantity of substance about the consistency of mashed turnip is found inside. This, when

cooked with oil, pepper, and salt, is very palatable. The portion above the soil is like a very thin sprig of privet bush, with less substance in the stem.

The stone of the meruley fruit is also carefully cracked, and the kernel picked out. In flavour it much resembles an old walnut, and the people esteem them a great delicacy.

The Bechuanas, I remarked, appeared exceedingly fond of their children. I do not think such is the case with the Massara; possibly they find them very much in the way when leading such a roving life. Moreover, the services of the young women in procuring food for the family must be very valuable. From this fact I suppose arises the practice of babes being handed over to their grandmothers to be suckled. Such unfair treatment of the child is rather to be deplored.

The probability that this race will become extinct is great: fifty years ago they were twice as numerous as they are now. The Matabeles, however, have much to do with the diminution of their numbers, for although they are not so prone to it now, at one period they were in the habit of hunting them like wild beasts, and showing them quite as little mercy.

On the whole the Massara seem to lead a happy enough life, and an occasion like the present is evidently considered by them a grand holiday. I explained to Um-ganey that I wished him to ask the guide what these host of people were to be paid; the reply was laconic, "Give them plenty meat."

Every morning I had a levée of sick natives—the men, that is, the invalids, who attended, generally had fearful sores or a disease of the skin, in which it appeared to peel off in large white flakes, but I usually

managed to effect a cure by the application of ointment. Nor should I neglect to mention that ophthalmia was common to both sexes. The latter I treated with a solution of nitrate of silver, and always found it an effectual remedy. But they were most troublesome patients to advise. I would spend half an hour tying up a man's leg, and in an hour after find him careering over the velt, after a wounded quagga or eland, like a mad creature.

As a matter of course, I have no right to prescribe, for I am not a doctor, but I treated my patients as I would myself under the circumstances, and always found that I relieved those who had come to me to seek my aid. I do not refuse to admit the skill of many of our physicians, but if there is a profession in which there is an enormous amount of humbug, it is in the medical.

A capital recipe Mr. Mackenzie gave me, to be used especially when the water was bad, was to mix a small quantity of Epsom salts with it. I followed the advice, and found great benefit from it.

CHAPTER XXXI.

LAI D UP IN THE GREAT THIRST LAND.

A Strange Spot—A Picturesque Camp—Namaqua Partridge—A Visit from the Bush-people—Dog seized by Leopard—A Prickly Screen for Safety—Massaras' Feeding-powers—Giving Ruby a Run—A Miss-shot—Koodoo—Stealing upon Giraffes—One brought low—After a Cow and her Little One—Ready for the Shot—Thrown—Gradually recover Consciousness—Used up—The Bushmen Find me—Lost—Brought Back to Camp—The Guide Hunts for me—His Success.

THE place we are encamped at is a strange spot. The Bechuanas call it one thing, the Massaras another; and an extraordinary being, a big, powerful man, covered with rags and pieces of skin, whose birthplace is a wonder to all, and who has, uninvited, made our camp his own, designates it by a third name, each of which seems more difficult than the other to pronounce. Schoolpat in Boer language means a tortoise—the name of our encampment resembles it in the Bechuana tongue; but there seem to be at least half a dozen syllables introduced.

Surrounded by woods without limit, the trees which compose them being in height and size about that of ten-year-old elms, ashes, and poplars at home, is a clearing covering nigh twenty acres. From the margin of the bush rises an unbroken rock of very hard, dark sandstone, to an elevation of about thirty feet above the neighbouring country. Its sides are not particularly steep, not more so than a horse or ox can ascend without difficulty; and in the centre of this mass of

stone is a pool, in parts very deep, and covering quite half an acre.

It is about the last place that the traveller would expect to find water, unless he were to watch the evening flight of doves or Namaqua partridge (a sand-grouse), both of which seem to have selected it as a favourite watering-place, good proof that no other pools are to be found in the vicinity.

Here I have erected a most picturesque camp, the sail of greased canvas intended to cover the wagon has been made into a giant tent, under which I pass my day and stable my horse at night. Lion spoor is so abundant about the neighbourhood, that such steps become imperative. So with a ship's lantern hanging over her head, and myself within sight, with a couple of double guns, loaded on purpose for emergencies, I feel that my pet is tolerably safe. In fact, as a concurrence in my belief, Ruby lay down at night, which I had never known her do previously after daylight had departed. The first evening here I went out at sunset, and soon shot enough Namaqua partridge to satisfy my whole establishment. They are a beautiful bird, almost as large as an English partridge, but of a much more varied and brilliant plumage, and feathered about the legs and feet, as all the grouse family are. On the wing they are amazingly rapid, their flight, from the size and pointed shape of the wings, resembling more that of a swift. However, as in wild-duck-shooting at flight-time, so with them—get them against the clear sky, aim well ahead, and after you have had a little practice, you can make very good shooting.

Some bushmen, attracted by our fires, paid us a visit during the evening. All assert that game is most abun-

dant, and that on the morrow they will show me elephants, giraffes, buffalo, or aught else I desire. I have had too much experience, or am getting too old, to be kept awake at night by anticipating sport, so soon went to sleep, and till day broke in the morning I never opened my eyes.

During the night, however, an adventure occurred at the bushmen's camp, about two hundred yards off. When near Ladysmith, in Natal, I bought a dog, resembling more a harrier than any other breed, for a few shillings. It was a spiteful, bad-tempered, cowardly brute, and always preferred the society of the servants to my own. Consequently I did not love it—rather the reverse, although I had never shown it any unkindness. However, this was the kind of brute it was—if the fore-loper was going to the south to herd his cattle, and I in the reverse direction to shoot, Mario, so named because of his grand voice, would give me the cold shoulder and follow the former. Well, he had preferred leaving the wagon and taking shelter under the lee of one of the heathen, doubtless having secured a considerable quantity of the sleeping man's caross over his back, when a hungry leopard spied him, hooked him out with his paw, and carried him off, in spite of the rescue attempted by the bushmen, armed with fire-sticks.

Being deprived of this dog, I did not mind, but the bushmen assured me that the leopard having been successful in his first effort, would not cease to come nightly till he had carried off every one of my favourites.

To prevent such a result, soon after I rose I made all my employés turn to and cut sufficient prickly mimosa to erect a formidable screen on the three sides of the wagon next the woods.

About nine o'clock, with three Massara bushmen, I started to hunt for meat. My encampment had become quite a place of rendezvous for all the people in the district, each of whom expected food, and such quantities of it, that they would have consumed an ox a day. To give an idea of how much they can eat, I will mention what has come under my observation, not once, but many times. After eating incessantly an hour or two—in which space of time they would have put out of sight six or seven pounds of flesh—they would leave the fire and go into the bush to become sick. That performance over, they would return and gorge as if nothing had happened. A zebra as big as a Galloway fourteen hands high would not last them over a day. So, with a crowd of this kind about me, I could not be expected to spare the game.

The early part of the day was unsuccessful. Ruby, who was very fresh, I had to take down a peg or two, an opportunity soon presenting itself. A brace of striped hyænas jumped up in front, so I gave the larger a burst, and in a mile finished him with my revolver. About an hour afterwards, a splendid koodoo (*todo*, Kaffir name) rushed past, at a distance of fifty or sixty yards. In a moment I was off the mare, took sight, and fired; but the bullet fell short, and the game entering some dense underbrush immediately afterwards, I did not get time to put in the second barrel.

This antelope is truly a splendid specimen of the family to which he belongs, is exceedingly graceful and active, frequently reaching the weight of five hundred pounds. Rocky, irregular ground and the sides of coppies are its favourite haunts, although it may occasionally be seen in localities of quite a different nature.

Its massive horns, with a corkscrew twist ascending them from the butt to near the point, are formidable weapons; so that, when brought to bay, the sportsman had better be careful. Their meat is exceedingly good, and their hide makes a valuable leather.

Leaving the koodoo to take care of himself, which it was quite evident he was capable of, we directed our course to another range where mimosa grew in abundance. This alteration of direction had not long taken place, when one of the bushmen seized Ruby's head-stall, and pulled her, and me—for I was on her back—behind a bush. Receiving a signal to alight, I dismounted, and cautiously followed one of the guides, when he pointed out eight giraffes feeding. Their tremendous height, long necks, short bodies, high withers and low rumps, it matters not how often I see them, make me feel disposed to wonder at their structure, and almost laugh at the absurdity of their appearance. But of one thing all may feel certain, that the Great Constructor of the universe has most admirably adapted them for the part they have to play in it.

I had my Martini-Henry in my hand, so, although the distance was over two hundred yards, determined to take a shot. The reason of my coming to this conclusion was, that the ground was so bare between us, that I felt convinced any attempt at a stalk would prove a failure. Accordingly, I took sight at the nearest female (males are so musky, that it requires the stomach of a black man to enjoy it as food), fired, and she fell all of a heap. The companions did not seem to understand the matter, but with uncertain gait commenced to move off. As the line they were pursuing would take them within a hundred yards of me, I

jumped on Ruby's back, and shoved a fresh cartridge into the breech of my rifle. This action warned the quarry where the danger was, so off they went at their extraordinary trot; but, however funny their gait appears, it has a marvellous capability of covering the ground.

Dear little Ruby! I christened you so because I thought you perfection, and thus being so like one I loved. But why think of the past? Ruby, in her keenness to be alongside the game, if I do not look out, will pull me over her head. It takes a good horse to catch a giraffe, but even with my weight up, if the ground were at all suitable, it never appeared any trouble for this little mare to overhaul them.

I singled out a cow of giant proportions, one of the largest I had ever seen; she was attended by a calf about seven feet high. Now this old lady was very crafty: soon she found out that speed could not save her, although she put on a wonderful turn of it, and made her tail describe a circle, of which the root was the centre and the tassel the circumference; so she altered her tactics, and made into some very dense bush, the little one sticking to her heels like a leech. At length I compelled her to leave this cover, when she made a dash out over the open, evidently with the intention of gaining some thick wood at the end of a copy.

No need of spurs: my little grey laid down at once to her work; every stride brought me closer and closer. Steady, my lassie; take the left side, if you please, and my rifle was cocked to deliver my shot, when Ruby put both her feet in an ant-bear hole or some other excavation, and I went flying over her head, how far I cannot say, into a clump of thorn-bushes.

For a length of time, giraffes, horses, and rifles were things I had no knowledge of. At length I became sufficiently conscious to sit up; my dear little mare stood over me, and looked with her large expressive eyes as if she wondered what was the matter. I tried to pull myself together, but for a time I could not; I felt no pain, yet I felt no power, though I was conscious that the sun was setting. Not for my own, but for Ruby's sake, I made another effort; the result was excruciating, though partially successful. Then I thought of my rifle. I searched for it, and found it with the barrel choked with sand. I had sense enough to know that in such a state it was not serviceable, and therefore cleared it.

Used up I undoubtedly was; a haze was over my eyes, and an amount of lassitude over my body, that I felt indifferent to what might follow, yet my affection for the little mare told me that I must light a fire, or run the risk of losing her during the night from the attack of some skulking marauder. Soon I found a fallen tree: it had long been blown down. I gathered the limbs, and piled them beside the trunk; the smoke gave way to fire, and the fire hungrily seized upon all that was in its vicinity and suited to its taste.

I have said I cared not for myself, whether devoured by wild animals or not was perfectly indifferent to me; I wanted to lie down and rest, possibly not to die, but to be in absolute rest. I was about to give way to my inclination when Ruby neighed; I looked up, and there were my bushmen—they had followed the spoor to where they found me. I understood not their language, neither did they mine, still I became aware that they wished me to go to the wagon by repeating the word *kiloé* (Bechuana for wagon), and I consented, perfectly

indifferent to what I did. To get into the saddle was a work of labour, but with assistance I succeeded. One of the Massaras led the way, the other two held me in my seat by the thighs. It was a *long, long* tramp, and much of the way was passed over in a semi-conscious state. The night air had freshened me up, the motion of riding had, I believe, assisted, for the stupor which had previously overpowered me commenced to give way. At least, I remember clearly the bushmen indicating by signs that my rifle should be ready for use. We then entered some dense reeds, among these we apparently wandered for hours ; at length I became cognisant that we were lost. If so, it did not matter much, so perfectly indifferent I felt to everything. However, the bushmen again moved forward and gained an open space. They had scarcely done so when two lions roared, apparently from the place we had just left. Anxiety for the mare—conscientiously I do not think it was for myself—made me make a further effort to pull myself together ; and while the Massara lay at length upon the earth, the better to see anything approaching, I stood prepared to use my weapon.

This state of watch continued fifteen or twenty minutes, when I thought I heard the report of a gun. In an instant my attendants were on their feet, and pronounced the mystic word *kiloé*, and leading my horse off to the left of the course we had formerly pursued, brought me to my encampment in less than an hour. On looking at my clock it was exactly half-past three. For nearly a week others had to hunt to keep the wagon supplied with meat. To Umganey's unremitting attention I believe I owe my life.

It is impossible, and perhaps not desirable, to

enumerate the quantity of the game killed. With the exception of killing elephants and ostriches for the sake of their ivory and feathers, I endeavoured not to slay anything that was not required; however, in thus limiting the slaughter I was not always successful, for the guide, who was an excellent hunter and very fair shot, had had the loan of one of my eight-bores, and with it dealt out, I fear, terrible destruction. At night he frequently came and tumbled into the wagon a tusk or two, or shoved into the tent a bundle of feathers, my share of his success in his hunt.

Thus hours drifted into days and days into weeks; from one place to another we shifted our encampment, but still the pot, or rather the flesh was on the fire. Elephants now commenced to get scarce, for these wily animals having been so much hunted, betook themselves to the hills adjoining to the eastward, where the tsetse abounded, and pursuit on horseback was impossible.

From my wagon, soon after break of day, I have seen numerous varieties of game within a quarter of a mile, any man who could handle a gun fairly might have gone forth and dealt destruction in the ranks of each.

If I had had a companion, one to whom I could talk, whether he were black or white, I should have been satisfied; but I was alone, veritably alone, and with attendants about me who regarded me as a milk cow, the cow to be sacrificed as soon as nature prevented it from giving a supply of the lacteal fluid. In spite of this I determined on leaving my wagon for a time to have a hunt on foot into the fly country.

CHAPTER XXXII.

ON THE RETURN JOURNEY.

Hunted by a Wounded Tusker—He Misses his Mark—Never will chase Man more—Good-bye to the Massaras—Souvenirs—My Gift to the Beauty—Treck, Treck, Treck!—Water-pits—Where has the Water gone?—Digging for the Precious Liquid—Quenching Thirst—A Baobab Tree—Meruley Fruit—Disaffection among my Servants—My Attendants have Fled!—Reviving the Fires—Stung by a Scorpion—My Attendants' Festivities—Disturbing the Merry-makers—Ordered to Return to my Camp—Foreloper Refuses—Coppies—Black Rhinoceros—Shot Dead—Klep Springers—My Saddle in Sad State—Little Grey Monkeys—Beautiful Koodoo.

INTO the fly country I went, game I found in the utmost abundance, particularly buffalo. If I had desired it I could have killed a dozen of them a day; but tuskers were what I wanted, and they were not scarce, but difficult to circumvent.

However, we persevered, and ivory came in plentifully. One incident which occurred in the weeks I spent away from my wagon is I think deserving of notice. For two days we followed on foot the spoor of several elephants; of course we slept out at night on their track, and under the circumstances tried to make ourselves as comfortable as we could. The third day we overtook our game in some hills not steep, but very rocky; our approach to them was unobserved, so that I got within thirty yards of a large tusker before I fired. The first barrel staggered him, the second missed fire, and before I could shove fresh cartridges into the breeches, my position was discovered, and I had to seek safety in

flight, while trying as hard as I could to reload the gun. An elephant does not appear to be going fast when in pursuit of his foe, but trust not your eyes, or you will have reason to repent it.

Thus I was hunted from pillar to post, and kept moving all the time ; ultimately the amusement became so exciting that I would willingly have dispensed with the attention of my pursuer, but I could not do so, for still I was a perfectly used-up man. Finally he nearly was on the top of me, so I turned and ran down the coppy side, the monster just behind me ; the ground was steep, so I suddenly, just as I thought the trunk was over my shoulder, turned to the left, and the big beast overshot me, and went on for fifty yards trying to stop his impetus ; turning suddenly round I gave him a two ounce bullet in the rump. He never chased a Christian afterwards.

At length time came for me to bid my Massara—for I have turned my steps homewards many days since—good-bye, and I really was very sorry to have to do so, for they were keen, expert hunters, very obliging and civil, and, I believe, strictly honest.

Meat they had had to their hearts' content, so the payment of them according to contract was settled ; but I felt still their debtor, for I had obtained, while among them, a valuable collection of ivory and many choice blood ostrich feathers ; further, I desired to leave among them something that would recall the stranger's visit when he was far away. So I summoned them to the wagon and handed to the chief man, for distribution, a bag of blue beads, a large coil of brass wire, and three or four pounds of Boer tobacco ; and to each of the women, who came gracefully forward to receive it, a

necklace, with locket pendant and a bracelet. These were of Birmingham manufacture, and were so well made, and so thoroughly resisted tarnishing, that any but an adept would have thought them gold. The delight of these primitive people when they saw the locket opened and shut was enthusiastic.

To the beauty I gave the handsomest; it was shown to all for inspection, and every time she caught my eye looking at her she clapped her hands and laughed and laughed again. An hour after she came to the wagon looking rather glum, and without her ornaments; she did not understand me, or I should have asked what had become of them; but this I soon discovered, for the great guide soon after came to my fire with them upon his ungainly person. He was not long in giving up his booty.

When the wagon started all came along with it as in days gone by; but after a few miles their ranks commenced to thin, yet none left without bidding me farewell. The last I saw of my Massara was a group of nine or ten standing in the road looking after the wagon; when they saw that I observed them they gave a wild shout and darted off across the velt.

It has been treck, treck, treck, since I commenced to narrate my adventures; if the word bores the reader, just let him think how much more it bored me. Want of water I have had many experiences of, but the following was the severest ordeal I had to endure. Thank God it was so, or I should not be here to tell it. From a dirty pool, alive with animal life, we had wound our tedious way to some springs we had heard of with the hope of getting my cattle an abundant supply of water before we commenced to cross a space of desolate sand velt,

an isthmus, as I may call it, of the Great Thirst Land, where we were convinced not a drop of liquid could be obtained for three days, and, possibly, if a certain vley were dry, for a longer time.

As it was moonlight, and that is the coolest time for trecking, and your cattle with such light seem to steal more rapidly over the ground, we made excellent progress, so that we were outspanned by the last water by nine o'clock.

The pits in which the water was contained we had learned were in the source of a dry river-bed—one of those extraordinary phenomena peculiarly representative of this part of Africa. That water flowed in them once constantly cannot be doubted; but what has become of it? Well I had better leave the scientific to explain.

However, all over the country they are to be found, some large, very large—two hundred and more yards across; others small, not greater than a little Scotch burn. Submerged in the hungry sand—here ever ready to swallow all it can engulf—you discover boulders and rocks, marked with the indelible and indisputable lines that tell so plainly that they have been submitted to the action of water from time immemorial. And the vegetation on their margins—the trees, and more especially the reeds, tell of the presence of water, but where is it to be found?

My boys discovered some old pits made by the bushmen; they were at least twenty feet deep, and all we could say of them was that the soil at their bottom was damp. However, they commenced to dig and scratch till they had made excavations as large as badger earths; then a little water trickled in to reward their labours, and they went to work more energetically. In an hour they had

got down several feet, and the stream commenced to flow; farther they went till they reached gritty sandstone. Here they stopped, for if you break this, and the fact is worth knowing, though few are aware of it, the precious fluid will run away. To these holes an hour's rest was given, when in each apartment was discovered thirty or forty gallons of water. I consequently had my drink and dear little Ruby hers. Then I left to hunt, the boys having strict orders to attend most carefully to the watering of the bullocks, which were now standing round the excavations looking as if they envied every drop of water which I and my horse swallowed.

In less than an hour I found giraffes; they were so remarkably tame that I do not know how many I could have killed, but I was satisfied with a cow. On my way home I encountered a large herd of the grandest of all antelopes, the eland; like the previous game they were so careless of their safety that I might have, with facility, made my choice of the herd. One reason for my getting near them with such ease was that the brush, all mapaney, was very thick and tall, fairly interspersed with larger timber, thus affording me every opportunity of, unperceived, approaching the wild animals.

When I returned to camp I found my cattle feeding, a sure indication that their thirst had been sated, for unless it is quenched these wilful beasts will not touch a blade of grass. As the pasture was good here I resolved to put off my departure till the next afternoon, and I informed my people of the intended delay.

In the afternoon I again went out for a stroll, and came across a great number of baobab trees. They grew generally at a distance of several hundred yards apart, and at the present time were covered with fruit. The

largest of these immense vegetable productions that I had yet seen was here found. I carefully measured its circumference and found it—almost incredible, I acknowledge—one hundred and forty feet in circumference. Truly it was a giant; like others that I have observed, it was hollow, scooped out till but a mere shell remained, and against that fires had been lighted in numerous places by the erratic Massaras. The abundance of game in the vicinity causes me to conclude that there is water near which my people know nothing of; further, that it is so scarce in front of us that all the beasts have been driven in, and thus congregated here.

The spoor of lions along the dry river-bed is very abundant; still there is so much prey for them, in the shape of their natural food, that I do not apprehend any danger from their attack. About sunset I viewed large numbers of Namaqua partridge flying north-west, also flocks of doves, a certain indication that open water is to be found in that direction. If I were not almost broken down by my fall from Ruby, and by another and severer accident, also with fever, and had not good grounds for believing that my people were disaffected, I could remain here for an indefinite time. My camping-place is very pretty—a wide long grassy glade, terminating in the river-bank, and fringed with beautiful trees, the meruley being most numerous. Umganey gathers their fruit in pailfuls, to make a drink for my parched lips. It is very refreshing, and superior to anything of the kind I know. What a pity no one tries to cultivate it, so as to reduce the stone, and increase the edible portion!

Disaffection has been apparent among my people for some time. As to its origin, I am entirely ignorant; and, worse than all, I believe Umganey to be infected

with the disease. Of course, not speaking the language of my people is a great drawback; and they again are equally ignorant of mine. Thus I may frequently misunderstand them. Again the fever, and the debility resulting from it, with other causes, have made me very fractious, and make me give way to temper when anything occurs through their negligence. Among the natives of this land no greater mistake can be committed, for they construe it into evidence of weakness, and weak I truly was. They possess the most wonderful imperturbable tempers themselves, and look at a want of it in others as the essence of childishness.

This evening I had cause to complain. I went to bed early, after seeing the fires made up, the cattle secure, and, in fact, everything in ship-shape order, giving Umganey parting instructions to see that more wood was collected. About midnight I was awoken by Ruby jerking against her halter, which was secured around the upper fellow of one of the hind wheels. Turning out to see what was the matter, I discovered that the fires had burned down to only a few coals, and that there was not a branch near to revive them with. I called for Umganey, the driver, and foreloper, in succession, but received no answer. Again and again I shouted, but with the same result. That they had deserted *en masse* was my first thought; but whether this was true or not, the fires must be replenished. A decayed mimosa I had observed in the early part of the day about a hundred yards off. To it I directed my steps, and commenced wrenching off the limbs. When engaged only a few minutes in this occupation, I was stung in the right wrist by a scorpion. The pain was intense. Still, I could not desist, firewood must be had

at all hazards. Again I got hold of a branch to break off, and again I was stung on the fleshy side of the hand. This treatment did not improve my temper, as may be imagined. Having revived the fires to my satisfaction, I sat down, and considered what I was to do if my people had really run away. A movement among the bushes on the ridge, and a strong effort of Ruby to break her halter, caused me to look round. Nothing was visible, yet I felt convinced some wild animal was near. So to make things doubly secure, I went into the wagon, and got both lanterns, and hung them over the mare's head, and then resumed my previous occupation.

In the distance I heard the soughing, or deep breathing of a lion, but consoled myself with the thought that the beast was retiring, or would not make that noise. I listened for the sound to be repeated, but instead of hearing it again, faint lullalooing, as if of Kaffirs enjoying themselves, fell on my ear. Again and again I heard it distinctly, and further imagined that I could see the reflection of a large fire in the distance. This accounted for the servants having left—doubtless they were attending some convivialities; but where came their hosts from? I had not seen evidence of the presence of a native the whole day. However, lions or no lions, I was determined summarily to put a stop to their establishing so reprehensible a precedent as this of walking off in the middle of the night, and leaving the encampment and my belongings to take care of themselves.

So I took my double gun, and marched off to seek the revellers. The task was not nearly so easy as anticipated—several small ravines and a dry crack had to be passed; brush and fallen trees impeding my progress.

At length I overcame all obstacles, and walked into the middle of the merry-makers. Among them were several strange Massara and their women; while on the fires was cooking a plentiful supply of elephant meat. As may be expected, I did not waste much time or use much ceremony in ordering my *employés* to the wagon. Umganey at once arose to do my bidding, the driver and another Kaffir sulkily followed his example; but the foreloper sat still, looking me impudently in the face. I went towards him to hasten his movements, but I suppose, thinking I was going to lay hold of him, he jumped up and fled into the bush, from which he emerged in a few minutes, with an assegai in his hand. I spoke to him, pointed to the wagon (*kiloé*), and waved my hand, indicating that I wished him to go there. In reply he brandished his weapon. None of the others interposed, but looked on sullenly. It was a trying moment. Should I shoot him down or not? He was guilty of breach of duty, insubordination, and now threatened my life. But it is a fearful thing to take upon oneself the responsibility of launching a human being into eternity, even when one's own life is in danger, so I desisted from further proceedings, and, followed by the three others, returned to my encampment—not a moment too soon, for I found the horse down, and partially strangled by the halter, and all the dogs and cattle in such alarm, that it took me quite half an hour to get them back to a proper state of quiet.

What disturbed the camp that night I never knew positively; although the spoor of a black rhinoceros was found in the vicinity next morning. Yet I do not think it could have caused the uneasiness, for animals of this

kind may dash into an encampment to gratify a momentary fit of passion, but would not spend their time idling about it.

Next morning at sunrise, with a couple of the newly-arrived bushmen, I went off to view some high coppies that lay to the north-east. They appeared like the *débris* of several immense quarries, carelessly thrown upon the plain. Here lay at hand the material to build a city without the trouble of quarrying. Frequently throughout this country this phenomenon occurs, and I am at a loss to account for it, unless it is caused by an upheaval produced by earthquakes. On approaching the first cobby one of the bushmen became excited, and pointed out something, then his companion followed suit; but for all that my eyes refused to see what theirs did.

These children of the desert have wonderfully sharp vision, being in that respect very much the superior of the white man. Advancing about fifty yards they again stopped. Taking the line that they pointed out, all I could distinguish was what appeared to me a large black stone. But the stone moved; it was a rhinoceros. I was off the mare in a moment, and leaving her with the bridle hanging between her legs, stalked forward to get a clear shot. The game, which had been lying down, rose on its fore legs as a fat pig might do, and carelessly looked about. Doubtless owing to its hearing or wonderful gift of scent, it had some idea that intruders were in the neighbourhood, yet it did not display the slightest indication of fear. It certainly had not seen us, but with these animals that is not always necessary to induce them to take the initiative and commence hostilities. I was now within sixty paces, and had a good tree at my back to take shelter in, if my two barrels did not

effectually do their work. I aimed at the thick part of the neck in front of the shoulder, and about two hands beneath the line of the withers. My gun was one of the eight-bores, which, with seven drams of Curtis and Harvey behind the bullet, was a most destructive weapon; but it required some substance in the shooter to resist the recoil. Taking a very steady, careful aim, I fired. The bullet told loudly, and the large swinish-looking beast simply shoved his fore legs out in front of him, and apparently settled down for another nap. There was no hurry, no alarm in the action, and I was astonished. Reloading, I thought I would try if the brute treated the contents of the left-hand barrel so cavalierly. No more notice of it was taken than if it had been a mosquito; even the rhinoceros bird moved about its master's back as intent on his avocation as he had doubtlessly been for many a previous week.

Being again prepared for anything that might occur, I approached; the bushmen preceding me by some distance; they took one or two suspicious glances, and then ran up, not, as I expected, to throw their assegais, but actually to get on the carcass. The beast was dead, killed dead in an instant, a little flowing blood on the nostrils and lips—save the heat of the body—being the only indication that it had so lately lived.

Following the edge of one of the coppies, I shot a pair of klep springers, the most graceful of the numerous graceful animals to be found in this region. Their flesh I did not require, but the hair of their hides would be useful to stuff my saddle with. Constant sweat and use have made that indispensable article sit so close to the mare's back that I have been lately obliged to use a piece of folded blanket underneath it—an awkward

thing at the best of times, and especially in a warm climate.

Abundant evidences of the late visits of elephants were to be found in every direction, and as I surmised that they were not distant, I thought I would take the trouble to look them up, but this fever is a fearful curse, it enervates the system so, that resist it as much as you choose, and resolve as frequently as you like not to give in, you still discover yourself making excuses for avoiding exertion in spite of all your resolutions.

I rode up one of the coppies some distance, then left the mare in charge of one of the men, and taking the other with me, clambered round to a more inaccessible portion to watch the gambols of a troop of the graceful little grey monkeys so common in this part of the world. They are certainly a wonderful burlesque on the human race; deprive them of their tails, and they would be perfect imitations.

While sitting here silent, so as not to disturb their antics, a beautiful koodoo, as large as a well-fed two-year-old heifer, walked out of the surrounding trees, and approached within fifty yards. The white transverse lines on its back were very wide and unusually distinct; its head was graced with a magnificent pair of horns. However much I should have liked to have these at home, the trouble of carrying them so many thousand miles was not commensurate with the reward. The cool, indolent manner in which this animal walked about was very amusing. If it had been a family pet in a home paddock it would probably have conducted itself in the same way. I hope it still lives and enjoys life as it then appeared to do.

As I intended trecking in the afternoon, I left this

fascinating place, where all is as nature formed it, unsullied and beautiful. On my way back to the wagon I saw giraffes in the distance, and although on capital galloping ground, I left them alone.

A party were despatched for a portion of the rhinoceros, who returned about three o'clock, when I sent for the cattle to commence the dreaded journey.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

OUR SUFFERINGS IN THE GREAT THIRST LAND.

Learning to Labour and to Wait—Utter Loneliness—Foreloper's Insolence—Doubts about Umganey—Looking for my Oxen—Trecking by Night—Camp attacked by Rhinoceros—Covered by a Blanket—A very cool Morning—A beautiful Spot—My Cattle unattended to—I fell the Driver and Foreloper—Foreloping in Sand—No Water to be had—Cattle maddened at the Smell of my small private Supply—Ackerman ungovernable—He knocks me to the Ground—Umganey ill—Poor Bob wounded—Poor Porty's Hind-legs Broken—Dire Extremities—Water! Water!—Saved—A Young Boer Traveller—His Misfortunes—His Saulted Horse slain by a Lion—Porty not Dead—Drinking-Places—Wild Animals quenching their Thirst—Elephant and Rhinoceros at the Water—Lion's Voice—Joined by Macalacas and Mashoonas—Bonty's Head cut open by some wild Beast.

It is one thing to send for your bullocks, and quite another to get them. With Umganey I had left orders for all to be prepared to move at three, but not the slightest arrangement had been made to do so.

I fretted, and fumed, and smoked, but all was of no avail, the cattle did not arrive till half an hour before dark, and then they had not been watered, so in spite of myself I was compelled to delay my departure for another day. This I should not have so much objected to, as the locality was all that could be desired; but it is ever disagreeable to find yourself subordinate to your servants, instead of being their master. To wait instead of being waited on is, to say the least, eminently distasteful.

Again, my fever was due on the morrow, which would probably incapacitate me from taking an active

part in supervising my affairs, for as far as in my power lies I trust to no one. Again, another strong, I may say all-powerful, reason for travelling was—well, the reader may feel surprise at my reason, but whether or not I will tell it—it was once more to be among people who understood what I said, and whose language I could comprehend. If Morris had not broken down, and in consequence been compelled to return home, we might have remained here for an indefinite period. I could have wished for nothing better; he might have killed the game, and I should have felt happy in his enjoyment of the sport; but to be alone, with no one to talk to, no one to tell what you have done, what adventures you have gone through, to sit by your fire alone at night, to keep your watch, to eat your meals without a person to speak to, is lonely work indeed, so lonely, so dull, so sad, that if a man went mad under the circumstances, my verdict would be, “What might have been expected.” I am not rich, I have not much to give, but I would have parted with that little to have had Morris with me.

Why the cattle were not up I have discovered to be due to the foreloper, who had made up his mind that he would have another night here. I am powerless to prevent it, so must make a virtue of necessity. The scoundrel has again been most insolent, and threatened me with his assegai. May the Supreme Being give me strength not to—I hate to write the words—take the provoker’s life. The temptation is strong, I may be wrong in resisting it, and it may cost me my own in consequence; but then after all it is but for one very weary to lay down his life, and for ever be at rest.

Umganey’s conduct has hurt me, but I must not

judge him harshly; he knows but a few words of English, and might possibly have misunderstood something I have said or done; even with that excuse I never thought to see him stand by inert and indisposed to interfere when my life was threatened. I would not have served him so though the odds had been a tribe to one.

That night all the Massara bushmen came up and camped beside my people; there was meat and to spare for all, so they made a night of it, and lullaloeed to their hearts' content. As no wild animal would approach while such a turmoil was taking place, I turned in early, took a heavy dose of quinine and chloral, and slept all night. In the morning I awoke refreshed, and felt almost myself again.

Again at the time appointed no cattle were forthcoming; I jumped on the mare and went to seek them, and the sun was only an hour high when I discovered them feeding in a ravine. Without more ado I drove them up. Yet they must be watered before going into the yoke, and that was a matter of time, when each animal had to be served separately, and from a pit thirty feet deep. The sun had gone down, it was what we call in Scotland "daylight gone," when the beasts were brought to the wagon. There was nothing for it but to yoke. I saw each ox put in his place, gave the order to treck, handed the mare to Umganey, and taking a lantern in my hand, led the way through ivory needle thorn and mapaney brush directly towards the southern cross.

Slowly, certainly, and, I may add, sadly, I struggled forward for five long hours till the brush gave place to open velt. From the stars I judged it to be midnight when we outspanned.

Plenty of meat hung to the wagon, and as on the previous evening the boys, foreloper and all, for that worthy had turned up when he found me resolved to go, built an enormous fire close by, and between eating and shouting kept me awake. Towards daylight this was still going on, when I heard several exclamations of terror. I looked out of the front of the wagon. The boys were flying helter-skelter everywhere, and a rhinoceros was trotting backwards and forwards across the fire, tossing carosses, skins, cooking-utensils, and blankets about as if they each contained some body. From England I had brought several red blankets, one of which in a weak moment I gave to Umganey. As it lay beside the fire it seemed to particularly take the fancy of the irate beast. At it he went, got his horn well into it, but there it seemed to stick, the more he shook his head the more it seemed tightly to wrap itself around it, entirely hiding the eyes. A struggle or two more was made, but still without avail; and the rhinoceros, ever grotesque, and more so under present circumstances than ever I saw it before, with a snort, bound, and kick started off as hard as he could go for the sombre shadows of the forest, with a two-ounce bullet behind his shoulder. How he escaped knocking that ornamental headpiece of his against a tree, an accident which did not occur as long as he was in sight, was truly wonderful. In the morning he was found dead.

Before daylight I turned out to see the cattle yoked; it was very cool, my teeth almost chattered as I went round about directing; exercise and employment soon corrected this, so again I headed the cavalcade to our next halting-place, as pretty a spot as can well be imagined. A ridge of hills appeared to bar our way:

when we got close to it I discovered an entrance (called *Poort* by the Boers) or passage. Having threaded this for more than a mile, a most beautiful level plain of about a thousand acres was entered, shut in on every side by hills. This valley-like plain was covered with baobab and meruley trees, while spoor of nearly all descriptions of game proclaimed it a favourite resort. Here let us rest, and we outspanned.

The driver and a big Kaffir whom I called William came to me, Umganey to the best of his ability acted as interpreter. Their proposal was that they thought they could find water enough for the mare and cattle a little distance off if I would permit them to take them. I readily gave my consent. After breakfast I took my rifle and wandered off to see as much as possible of the beauty of the place. About noon I returned. Two hours passed and there was no sign of the cattle returning, so I went in search of them. They were soon found, but it was evident from their hollow flanks that they had not had a drop of water. I drove them up so as to be ready to yoke when the absent ones returned. This they did soon after. To my surprise I found the mare Ruby—the animal I so much loved—who never would have borne the name she did but for her numerous good qualities, reminding me of her whom to know was to love—was severely cut about the neck, and contused nearly all over the head.

The driver was insolent, the foreloper jeered me. I could stand it no longer—my patience was worn out; so, like a bird of prey, I rushed upon them. A yoke-key was in my hand; I struck, meaning to hurt, and in an instant both lay stunned at my feet. When they recovered, along with the Kaffir William, they walked

off, and left me to get through the Great Thirst Waste the best way I could. Umganey was with me, it is true, but his countenance plainly indicated that his sympathy was with the enemy.

Delay was now impossible, so he and I inspanned the bullocks, he foreloping and I driving. Ackerman was on his worst behaviour; he most determinedly ran into every tree that was near. The axe consequently was seldom out of my hands; but I did not shirk my labour, so that before dark we had accomplished a long treck.

Next day Umganey and I trecked and foreloped in turns: the labour of the latter task no one can imagine. The sand was loose, and came over the uppers of my boots at every stride, while the parched bullocks moved as if every step would be their last. Toward evening I discovered that the runaways were following me; their desire to obtain food was doubtless the reason. So I told Umganey that on no account were they to have any of my provisions, and that neglect on his part to attend to what I said would bring upon him my severest displeasure.

Worn out and heart-sick, soon after dark I lay down in the wagon: the cover by this time had almost entirely been worn or torn off it. I slept longer than anticipated, and was awoke by the noise of voices speaking. Shoving my hand under the pillow, I secured my revolver, and quietly raising myself, looked out, and there were the wretches, who cared not whether I lived or died, eating my supplies. Again I had a mind to shoot, but did not; instead, however, I sprang from the wagon. In an instant the driver and foreloper were into the bushes, and out of sight, the big Kaffir sur-

rendering at discretion. He had done nothing but leave, and this doubtless at the instigation of the others, so I determined to have no words with him then, but wait till I could bring him before his chief in the kotla.

Next day, we all took turns driving and foreloping. The latter was too hard work for one person to continue constantly at. By night we reached a large vley, where we hoped to find water. Alas! it was dry; and then thirty miles more had to be traversed before there was the slightest possibility of getting any.

The trials we all had that night were fearful. Slowly, almost by inches, the wagon toiled on, for the sand was deep enough to cover the felloes of the wheels. The poor oxen! my heart bled for them. Their throats were so parched they could not low, while their insides produced a grating noise, as if two hard substances were being rubbed together. The boys, with the usual improvidence of their respective races, had used or wasted their supply of water, but I still had a little remaining in my facheys. I could not spare them any, for I had already denied myself drink, that I might sponge out Ruby's mouth, so as to reduce her sufferings as much as possible.

At midnight we outspanned for a couple of hours. We lit only one fire, and, dejected and down-spirited, cowered over it. We had no fear of wild animals. Here, so far from water, they were not likely to be found. Whether or no, I do not think any of us cared very much if they did pay us a visit.

Before trecking, I went to my facheys to draw a small tin of water to divide between the mare and myself. The oxen smelt it, and became in a moment like mad animals. Shouts and blows reduced them all

to some semblance of discipline, except old Ackerman ; he reared, pulled backwards, and rushed forward. Pacify him we could not, so at length he broke his reim, and rushed madly about the wagon. At length he discovered the vessel that contained the water, and endeavoured to knock it down. I went to the rescue, for I feared the fall of the small keg would cause it to be stove in, and the precious fluid lost ; but the mad ox turned on me, knocked me down with a severe blow on the head, given by the side of the nigh horn, and afterwards tramped on my leg. I only saved myself by having presence of mind to crawl under the wagon. It took half an hour to secure that crazy brute, and even then, tied with a double reim, it struggled so fearfully, that several times it threw itself down.

Again we trecked till daybreak, when we outspanned for two hours ; but the cattle would not eat the dry herbage around them. Umganey was too ill to forelope, so I made him get into the wagon, and took the leading reim myself. If any one could have seen me, toiling and hauling the half-dead cattle through the heavy sand, pouring with perspiration and hid in a cloud of dust, they must have pitied me, even supposing them to be the hardest-hearted people in the world.

But if we suffered, and the cattle suffered, the poor dogs appeared to endure the ordeal worse. They ran about like creatures that were blind, recognised no one, and were momentarily in danger of getting run over.

About ten o'clock I heard a yell : I dropped the leading reim, and ran back. The hind wheel had passed over one of poor faithful tried Bob's legs, and broken it. I lifted him in my arms and placed him on

my bed in the wagon. He would not stop there, so I had to leave him to hobble on the best way he could, and retake my place in front.

I had long resolved what to do if the wagon came to a standstill—namely, ride on with the cattle, and leave the Kaffir to take charge of them, and bring back as much water as I could carry. Several times I thought the emergency had arrived to adopt this, but through my hauling, and the Kaffir using his whip, we continued to crawl slowly forward.

Another yell. This time it is poor little Porty, the gift of Mr. Mackenzie—both hind legs broken. As she lay on the road, incapable of further effort, I thought it best to have her destroyed, yet I had not the heart to take her life. So we moved forward about a couple of hundred yards, when I sent the Kaffir back with his assegai to do the deed I could not myself do. Soon he returned. I asked him no questions; I wished to know nothing of the termination of my favourite's life.

Again I hauled and pulled, the perspiration blinding me, the dust choking me, while my throat was so dry that I could not swallow. The cattle must go on to water alone, another mile they cannot accomplish; sending them forward is our only salvation, when every ox commenced to step out, then to walk fast, then trot, then gallop. The dogs, even Bob on his three legs, rush on ahead, and in an hour afterwards we are outspanned, each bullock standing up to his middle gulping down filthy water that lay in a hole in a dry river-bed. But foul as this liquid was, all seemed to enjoy it; the oxen filled themselves to such an extent that as they moved up the bank it ran in streams out of their mouths. The dogs lay in it, and lapped and lapped again, while Umganey

and the Kaffir drank and washed and paddled in it for upwards of an hour.

To appreciate water thoroughly one has to go through an ordeal like the foregoing. Such an experience of the Great Thirst Land, although lasting only a few days, will take years from a man's life.

Beside this pool of water I found a young Boer outspanned. My woe-begone appearance, my exhausted cattle, and last, though not least, my coverless wagon, brought him to me full of feelings of sympathy. But he, poor fellow, had lately suffered some buffeting; possibly it made him more able to appreciate trouble endured by others. To some men it might appear a trifle what he had to complain of; to those who know the people of the northern portion of the Transvaal who live by elephant-hunting quite the reverse.

He was *en route* to his favourite shooting-ground, doubtless expecting to return in six months or a year with ivory and ostrich-feathers enough to start him in life, when yesterday in broad daylight the lions had pulled down and killed his saulted horse. Without it, it was useless to go forward, and if he returned he had not the means of purchasing another. His trip was ruined, and indefinitely he would have to wait till circumstances would enable him to replace this valuable accessory to his means of a subsistence.

Possibly he had made up his mind that this was to be his last expedition, and perhaps some fair-haired Boer damsel was even now counting the days when her affianced husband would return with wealth sufficient to stock a farm and make her his bride.

Yes, the poor fellow—stalwart and manly as he was—could scarcely hide the tears that unbidden rose to his

eyes. I felt for him—sincerely sympathised with him. He informed me that there was a perfect troop of lions about this water, that they were round his cattle all night, and he and the boys had in consequence been kept the whole time in attendance on the fires to prevent their attacking his team.

Not liking such news I determined to treck at once, and get a few miles farther on my route before night closed in.

My attendants evinced every reluctance to such a step, but I insisted, and had my way. We had scarcely travelled a mile when poor little Porty on his broken stumps overtook us. The Kaffir had not obeyed my instructions, so the wretched sufferer, strong in affection for his master, enduring the most excruciating agony, had followed along the tedious, sandy road. The injuries were such that it appeared impossible that anything living could accomplish such a task, so I resolved to try to save her life. I placed her in the wagon, and tied her there, she submitting to the operation with a very bad grace.

An hour after sundown we were outspanned upon an open velt, with plenty of firewood stored for the night's consumption, and the guns ready for immediate service. William the Kaffir was a plucky fellow and a good shot, so I trusted him with one of the double barrels, and he and I took watch, turn about during the night.

When water becomes scarce in these thirsty plains, the whole of the wild animals that inhabit them congregate around any pool that may be left, for with very few exceptions all have to drink once in twenty-four hours. The lions, which follow the game, thus are led

to these drinking-places not only to assuage their thirst, but to satisfy their hunger.

To watch one of these pools at night, as I did in the northern Massara country, is a grand sight, and one never to be forgotten. The naturalist and the sportsman can here see sights that will astonish them, and cause them to wonder at the wonderful instincts possessed by the animal kingdom. That the Creator has ordered all things well we know, but the minute details to which they have been reduced is seldom noted except by those who live not the life of the busy trading world, such as wander into those portions of the earth undisturbed by the presence of man.

At such watering-places the small antelopes invariably drink first, the larger later on, and with them the zebras and buffaloes. After these come the giraffes, closely followed by the rhinoceros, and next the elephant, who never attempts to hide his approach—conscious of his strength—but trumpets forth a warning to all whom it may concern that he is about to satisfy his thirst. The only animal that does not give place to the elephant is the rhinoceros; obstinate, headstrong, and piglike, he may not court danger, but assuredly he does not avoid it. The elephant may drink by his side, but must not interfere with him, for he is quick to resent an insult, and I am assured that when one of these battles takes place the rhinoceros is invariably the victor. The elephant is large, of gigantic power, but the other is far more active, while the formidable horn that terminates his nose is a dreadful weapon when used with the force that he has the power to apply to it. I have been told on trustworthy authority that a rhinoceros in one of those blind fits of fury to which they are so subject, attacked

a large wagon, inserted his horn between the spokes of the wheel, and instantly overturned it, scattering the contents far and wide, and afterwards injuring the vehicle to such an extent as to render it useless.

The lion is not tied to time in drinking. After it feeds it comes to water, but it never would dare to interfere with the rhinoceros or the elephant. Where the buffalo exists in numbers it is the principal prey of the lion; in other localities antelope and chiefly the zebra are its food.

A strange circumstance connected with the lion is, that it is almost impossible to tell where he is when you hear his voice. When roaring loudly he places his head to the ground, gradually raising it as he diminishes the power of his voice. Although I cannot say that I recognise anything terrible in the lion's voice, many other people do, and I have been in the company of persons who became completely demoralised while it lasted. That this animal's voice makes the earth vibrate is a fact.

The peculiarity I have alluded to of it being difficult to distinguish where the king of beasts is by his voice is said to be utilised in this way: their prey hear it, and to avoid the destroyer rush into his grasp.

A Bechuana hunter of great experience told me this in presence of many of his countrymen, and there are no closer observers living of the animal world amid which they reside than these people.

We trecked next day, and made satisfactory progress. At noon I had occasion to turn back a few hundred yards on the trail, and I found, to my astonishment, the spoor of several lions, whose treck was over the bullocks', and, therefore, must have been placed there since we

passed. Surprised, yet desirous of finding out whether we were being followed by the brutes, I went several hundred yards farther, and became assured such was the case.

Returning, I informed Umganey and William the Kaffir of my discovery; there was nothing to be apprehended from them by daylight all agreed, but at night—and we should have to treck the greater portion of it, or we would not reach water on the morrow—we should have to be additionally careful.

A little piece of luck here occurred; we were overtaken by a party of Macalacas and Mashoonas going to the Diamond-fields. For food they were willing to accompany us and give us any assistance required. Thus I got a foreloper and a man to lead the mare, with several others that could be utilised in any manner desirable.

Our first night-treck was commenced immediately after sunset. One of the new people walked in front of the foreloper with a lantern, Ruby was led behind the wagon by another, then the rest of the people, Umganey just behind them with the other lantern, and myself last, armed with my double gun.

That the lions were about us all night I am certain, for the bullocks and the mare were constantly showing signs of great alarm, and poor Bonty, who happened to leave the road, got a blow from something that cut his head open, causing him to sing out most emphatically, and seek the shelter of the wagon, which he carefully avoided leaving till break of day.

As the journey was a short one to the next drinking-place—fourteen or fifteen miles—I went on, leaving instructions to be followed by the wagon. The day was

very close and sultry, and the sand on the road exceedingly heavy.

To the left, on a large open space, which until lately had been a large vley of water, a number of ostriches were feeding, but at such a distance that I did not deem it expedient to disturb them, more especially as there was no cover in the vicinity to assist me in a stalk.

Ostriches are so wary, and their long necks give them such a control of distance, that without shelter it is perfectly useless to try and get within a range in which there is a probability of doing execution.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE LION OF THE GREAT THIRST LAND.

No Water—Ruby's Faintness—Her Splendid Behaviour—Meeting with a Lion—His Lordship turns tail—We come upon Water—Meet with English Traders outspanned—A Pleasant Time—Dine with one another—My Wagon and theirs—Excellent Feed—A Lion within easy reach of me—Prefer not to be snapped up—Bayed at by Curtin's Dog—Oxen prepared against Attack—Strange Mashoona Custom—We Part—About the Baobab—The species of Lions—Black-maned—Yellow-maned—Their Characters—Maneless—The Lion of the Great Thirst Land—North and South Africa.

FIRST one place and then another where I had hoped to discover at least a small quantity of water I found dried up, the bottoms baked as hard as stone. The last place I knew of, about eight miles farther on, might also be in the same state. The question was whether poor little Ruby would stand the ordeal, for she suffered much. Yet she has not evinced any symptom of weakness, still it has struck me twice during the last hour that a certain giving beneath the saddle spoke plainly that there was a limit beyond which even the very best and pluckiest specimens of horseflesh could not go. However, of two evils choose the lesser, and it appeared to me that to break down looking for water was better than to give up and patiently wait for a release from all our earthly troubles through thirst.

Rhinoceros spoor was so abundant that I felt convinced that water was near if I only knew where to look for it; but I was too weary, and my little mare too used

up, to make experiments, so I resolved to push on till I reached the vley, where I anticipated finding it.

The sand along the track was so fearfully loose, such as you sometimes find by the coast, that it seems to pass away backwards under the pressure of your foot, and cut short the length of your pace by one-half, so I took to walking until we got at least on better ground.

This was reached in about a mile and a half, and, without exception, it was as wearisome a tramp for the distance as ever I experienced. But, thank goodness! there is an end to all things, and at length I had the satisfaction of feeling firm soil beneath my feet. As the day was not yet old, and desiring to rest Ruby, I thought I would tramp on a little farther, so passing my arm through the reins I led the way, she following close on my heels. Among her many good qualities this was one she possessed, most valuable in a hunter's horse, and even when I would halt to shoot she would stop and never jerk back, as too many will, to the certain destruction of the aim of the marksman. Thus we had gone on possibly a mile from where we had left the sand, when I felt almost an imperceptible tightening of the rein across my shoulder; I turned round to see, if possible, what could be the cause, when I observed Ruby's eyes very much expanded, and gazing to our left front; following the direction indicated, about sixty yards in advance, and close to the road, I discovered a large male lion, with a magnificent dark mane.

He had already discovered our approach, and was standing up, switching his flanks, yet looking irresolute whether to retire or advance. While hesitating what was the best course of action to pursue, the king of

beasts thought to intimidate me, for with a quiet, measured step he advanced, showing his teeth, and giving utterance to a short, smothered growl. Cocking my gun, I waited, resolved not to fire till the brute was within thirty yards, when, if the first bullet did not do its work, the second would be delivered at a shorter range. His majesty, however, disapproved of the position of affairs, halted, looked round to see if the way were open for retreat, turned, and trotted quietly off, every few strides casting a look over his shoulder, to assure himself that he was not followed. Had the range not been so great, I should have fired; but possibly it was better I did not do so, for if I had only wounded the animal, it certainly would have been a case for the second barrel to decide whether he or I was to be killed.

This little *contretemps* seemed to put fresh energy into myself and mare, for when I got into the saddle, of her own accord she managed to get up a canter, which she retained for a couple of miles.

The vley could not be very distant now, and I was commencing to wonder that it had not been already reached, when I heard the tinkling of ox-bells, and soon after saw a large mob of cattle, in charge of some Matabele herdsmen. Approaching them, I found one understood a few words of English, so I told him not to go in the direction in which the cattle were feeding, as I had just seen a lion. On that the herdsmen headed the cattle in the direction I was pursuing.

At length I recognised that the forest was becoming less dense, the renewed energy of my mare told me that she smelt water, and was anxious to reach it, so giving her a slack rein, she broke into a gallop, and in a few

minutes after was up to her knees, gulping down the craved-for liquid with apparently insatiable avidity.

I had now time to look about, and with pleasure discovered that three wagons were outspanned close by, so I turned my steps towards them. The first I came to, the proprietor, a young Englishman of the name of Curtin, came forth and welcomed me, begging that I would become his guest till my own conveyance came up. With gratitude I accepted the kindness, so dismounted, and knee-haltered my horse. I then went to the next wagon, in which I found the proprietor, Mr. Catenby, who would hear of no refusal, but that he should become my host; but having explained how a previous arrangement would prevent this, he sent over word to the gentleman I had spoken to first, to say that he also would be one of his guests. The third wagon belonged to a Boer, who could not speak English—a fine, tall, handsome specimen of a man, with the reputation of being an excellent hunter.

I felt so thoroughly tired, that from sheer exhaustion I threw myself on the ground; but Mr. Catenby and Mr. Curtin, kind, good-hearted fellows, produced a glass of brandy, purloined from their small stock reserved for medicinal purposes, the result of which was that in a quarter of an hour I was myself again.

This unexpected meeting was so pleasant, that we agreed that as it was Saturday afternoon, all should postpone trecking till next evening; and as I was to be their guest to-night, they would be mine at an early hour on the morrow.

Before sunset my wagon arrived, so travel-stained and worn that it looked a sad, sorry affair when contrasted with their smart, painted, snow-white covered

ones. Will their appearance be the same when, in a year hence, if no casualty has happened to their owners, they retrace their steps to civilisation? It is doubtful indeed—more than doubtful.

As the ground on the edge of the vley was all occupied, my people had to take up an outside position, and, in consequence, I gave strict orders for an unusually large supply of firewood to be laid in; with the far end of the treck-tow made fast, and the oxen secured with short reims to their yokes.

The sun had not long been set when Mr. Curtin's man came to borrow my chairs, and announce that dinner was ready. We followed him over to his wagon, and just as the gloaming was quickly fading away into darkness we sat down to our meal, with a small clear fire between us, as the evenings were getting cool. Our feed was excellent—it was a stew made out of kid, and thickened with rice and onions. It was our only dish, truly, but our appetites were not fastidious—we were hungry, and could eat so much of this homely fare, that we had no desire for *entrée* or dessert.

A few bushes extended from the woods to within ten or twelve yards of where I sat. To this my back was turned; while Mr. Curtin was seated on my left, Mr. Catenby on the right. At length our meal was finished, and the plates had been removed. Then the soother of all our troubles, the consoler in all our difficulties—the pipe—was produced, loaded, and brought into service. Our tin beakers were again replenished, for I had ransacked my supplies, that I might add something at least better than water—one mass of animalculæ and filth—to the feast.

Our tongues became loosened; times like these, and

associates thus unexpectedly met, are ever the cause of conversation becoming fluent, and a pleasant night being passed. Thus we were enjoying ourselves, when I heard—well, a low, heavy, suppressed breathing, and a rustling, as if some large body were forcing a passage through the bushes. My ears of late had been too well accustomed to such sounds not to know what they indicated, so not to alarm the others, I quietly asked them to excuse my stepping over the fire between them, as I wished to turn my face in the other direction. I did so, and put down my stool. Both my new friends looked at me with surprise—then one of them remarked, “You had some object in that; you did it in such a methodical manner.” To this I agreed, and added, “There is a lion behind me, and if he meditates mischief, I would sooner be attacked in front than in rear.” “You must be mistaken, you are most assuredly deceived, it would never think of coming so near our fires.” And at this moment a large white dog, belonging to Mr. Curtin—a cross between the greyhound and mastiff—rushed from beneath the wagon, where he had been sleeping, dashed into the bush, and commenced to bay some animal, that evidently had no intention of giving way, and which he was unable to attack.

We left our seats and retired to the wagon, and under its shelter smoked our pipes to the end; however, we had not got quite so far in the enjoyment of the weed when the lion, finding himself discovered, got up, walked off a few paces, and then placing his mouth to the ground awoke the sleeping echoes that lurked around the neighbouring coppies.

Curtin was tired and went to roost, Catenby came with me to my wagon, because it occupied the point of

danger. Willingly my lads piled more fuel on the fires, till the brilliant flames rose several feet from the ground. My new friend and self, with a gun each at hand, took our seats upon the wagon-box, and scarcely had we done so when the roaring recommenced, and was answered in several different directions.

My dogs were no use, closer and closer they crouched in their sleeping-places, while the white dog of Mr. Curtin was out baying the marauders, giving indication by his voice and vehemence of the whereabouts of the enemy. But my oxen were a sight to look at; one by one, when they had heard the dreaded sound, rose from their previously recumbent position and faced towards where they apprehended danger. They had learned by this time to place confidence in man, and that their safety depended upon being in his vicinity; so they stood, without an effort to break loose, with their small ears erect, and their eyes looking as if they would burst from their sockets.

At length day broke, and the disappointed carnivora retired to the east, indicating by an occasional growl or suppressed roar that the success of their night's work had not been satisfactory. The spoor in the morning was easily found, and the natives asserted that there were no less than seven in the coterie.

A circumstance occurred during the loudest part of the serenade. I have seen the same take place before, but it is sufficiently strange to mention. A Mashoona took a brand from the fire and walked into the woods directly towards the lions. When he had got close to them he waved his fire-stick about his head, and then made a long speech in a very highly-pitched voice. Mr. Catenby, who is conversant with the language, translated

it at the time. The words, as nearly as I can remember, were—"O mighty lord, why do you come and disturb my cattle, or have you become too old and lazy to hunt, or are you turned woman-hearted? Go your way, the quagga and hartebeest are yours, the koodoo and the buffalo: they await you while you lose your time here; leave, I say, or we shall think you no better than the hyæna, whose associate you will become."

This man must have gone quite close to the lions, and yet he had no other protection than the glowing coal at the end of a stick not over an inch and a half in diameter.

After an early dinner, and a right good one it was, for I had coran and several brace of Namaqua partridge and stein-buck boiled into rags to make soup, we waited for the hour of trecking, I to find my way to Soshong beyond the Bamanwatto Hills, my new friends to *treck, treck, treck*, till they had passed the northern limits of the Great Thirst Land. But before the moment of parting comes we have still a little time on our hands, which we shall endeavour to make the most of.

Here in this vicinity occur the first specimens to be met with, going from the south, of that mammoth of the vegetable kingdom, the baobab tree, supposed by some to have had its existence prior to the Flood. It is far from a handsome production, resembling, the more I look at it, an inverted beetroot or carrot than anything else I know. Its height is seldom more than eighty or ninety feet, but from the enormous thickness of the stem, and the few branches that it possesses—trees in themselves—it does not look half so high.

The fruit has the appearance of an unhusked cocoanut, but instead of the exterior being brown it is green,

and covered with a velvety surface. It is frequently called the cream of tartar tree, because between the seeds there is a pulpy, crystallised-looking substance, which when soaked in water makes an extremely pleasant acid drink. Persons suffering from fever use it, and I am informed derive great benefit from its gentle purgative qualities.

The vitality this tree possesses is truly amazing ; you may burn around it, cut the bark through with an axe, and in fact do what you like to it, still it resents all efforts at its destruction.

Its trunk is very frequently hollow, with an opening on one side ; the interior then becomes a dwelling-place for snakes, scorpions, and centipedes. Its upper branches also are a favourite resting-place for birds, from the giant crane and the crested crane to the sociable grosbeak. Thus these trees are a zoological garden on a small scale.

The specimen before me measures only eighty feet in circumference—a trifle the reader may say—but one of the boys informs me through Umganey that he has seen plenty twice as big. In the interior of this one fifty men might have found sleeping space. The big trees of California are rather thrown in the shade by the baobab tree.

Of lions, as of leopards and zebras, I am certain that there are three distinct species. By asserting this I do not mean to say that the one may not cross or breed with the other. The greyhound or Newfoundland will with the pug or turnspit (wretches which have become fashionable under the name of dachshund, and which a very gullible public have been induced to become purchasers of), yet the cross is a nondescript, and

represents neither one thing nor the other. By one skilled in dogs the characteristic marks of both will be easily detected in the bastard offspring, for they are as different from their parents as chalk is from cheese, yet I would not make these nondescripts represent a species.

I daresay many will differ from me, but the following is the classification I should make of the South African lion: the black-maned, the yellow-maned, and the maneless.

The first animal stands high on his legs, in fact, is the tallest of the race, lightest in the limb, most active and most courageous. I think that this brute hunts for pleasure as well as profit. I would not say that every day this occurs, but that frequently it is instigated by a love of the chase, and undertakes it or a descent on a bullock train for the sake of the fun that it has in slaughtering; as far as man is concerned, this is the most venturesome and consequently the most to be dreaded.

The next is the yellow-maned lion, an uncouth, great powerful beast, massive in limbs and neck, and enormous in its girth of chest, but always possessed of a hollow back, and looks extremely weak across the coupling. This animal will attack anything, but it wants hunger to wake him up from his lethargy. Not that he is a coward—far from it—but a lazy beast, who loves his ease, and will not take exercise until compelled to do so to support the calls or demands of nature.

The first or dark-maned lion will get into a kraal, seize an ox or calf, and take it away with him; the second will eat it if hungry where slaughtered, and defy fifty men to prevent him. The latter at such a time can

as easily be shot as a familiar bullock or horse ; the former is always on the *qui vive*, and until he is prostrate on the ground, and the white stripe along his belly is conspicuous, look out, for if he has a kick in him and can do mischief he will.

The yellow lion will give up life in a respectable way, not as a coward, but as one resigned to circumstances. The black-maned will fight on to the bitter end, even although every effort it makes causes its heart's blood to flow upon the velt, and hastens dissolution.

The one, in fact, is the hero who does his best in the fight and succumbs to the odds ; the other is the Malay who *runs amuck* and buries his creese in whatever approaches him while he possesses a hand to move.

But the maneless lion, more like, with the exception of the size of his head, a panther than the others I have spoken of, possesses all the stealth and cunning of the animal he resembles, his habits are possibly more nocturnal, and he is seldom heard to howl. Man he will attack if wounded or coerced, but not under other circumstances ; his activity is immense, and his power commensurate with it. Bushmen say that he will lodge in the lower branches of a tree ; of this I have not had evidence, but these people are keen observers of the animal kingdom, and seldom tell untruths upon the subject.

If the Guzerat or maneless lion of India is a distinct species, then its representative in Africa is the same. Your stay-at-home naturalists oppose everything they do not know ; but if to them we had to trust for information, we should be as ignorant at the present day as we were a thousand years ago.

The Kaffirs and their kindred tribes, who are such

admirable practical naturalists that they can imitate the actions and voice of all the wild animals that exist in their vicinity—and do so so perfectly that they will charm the most experienced practical observer—recognise this distinction, namely, that there is a maneless lion, and that it is a distinct breed from the other species found in their land.

Here, in the Great Thirst Land, in the Kalahari Desert, I believe that the lion attains greater magnitude, in fact, greater perfection than he does anywhere else in the world, except possibly in the Atlas range of mountains in North Africa. The reason of this is obvious; to support himself he must hunt, and with a due amount of exercise—just sufficient to keep his body in a proper state of health—he can obtain a sufficiency of animal food. The nature of the country makes this so, while the climate on these table-lands is not enervating, but the reverse, making exercise desirable and pleasant.

The temperature during the day may not unusually rise to 96° , but invariably at night, especially towards the morning, descends to 70° or thereabouts. Thus the lion does not lead a life of indolence here, necessity compelling him to seek his food, and not to lie in wait for it.

On the Nile and other bottom lands, where the vegetation is extremely dense and game abundant, with cover in such luxuriance that places of ambush can everywhere be found, this animal suits himself to circumstances, procures his meal, and sleeps till he again feels the calls of hunger. Day after day is this repeated till it becomes the experience of a lifetime. But that is not the existence which develops muscle, or

produces activity, or engenders growth. No ; the lion of the Great Thirst Land is as much the king of lions as the lion is king of beasts.

In the Atlas Mountains the black-maned lion is invariably found, on the Congo and Niger the yellow-maned, and here both. This is not to be wondered at when we perceive that the country, although within the tropics, is possessed of a sub-tropical climate.

The Southern Hemisphere is not like the Northern ; the immense fields of ice that gird it, with almost a total absence of land, cause the cold winds to penetrate a great many degrees farther to the equator than they would in the north.

The mountains opposite Cape Town, not higher than the Grampian Hills in Scotland, and in about 34° S. latitude, I have seen covered with snow. Where in similar elevation and similar latitude can you find the same thing north of the tropic of Cancer ?

CHAPTER XXXV.

A THUNDERSTORM IN THE GREAT THIRST LAND.

Ruby's first and only Disobedience—Having a Good Time—A Rare Chase—On the Road again—A Storm brewing—Lightning—A Halt—Is the Wagon safe?—A Suggestion that clears the Wagon in the twinkling of an Eye—The Storm subsides—The Face of Nature next Morning—I ride on to Soshong—The Silver Tree—A Migration of Reptiles—Bonty overtakes me—Near Kama's Cattle-Kraals—Ugly Natives—Can't get Information as to my Way—Suspicious People—Must I sleep out?—Mr. Mackenzie's "Herd."

THE first act of disobedience, in fact, the only one perpetrated by Ruby, she was guilty of this afternoon, immediately before trecking. I think, under all the circumstances, the reader will say it was pardonable when he hears what it actually was.

Since I became her owner, she had seen none of her own race, and doubtless possessing a love for society, when she was turned loose among the horses belonging to my acquaintances, she went in, in American parlance, for having a good time. All Sunday forenoon she scampered about, taking the lead in all descriptions of mischief, her example being closely followed by her *confrères*. However, we were obliged to keep several of the attendants on the watch around them, for fear any of the disturbers of the peace of last night might be lurking in the locality.

Although the horses were thus surrounded by a *cordon*, the area of which could not exceed three or four acres, there was among them such racing and chasing as

had not been seen since the days of Cannoby Lea; and when the hour for departure came, the happy creatures seemed very indisposed to give up their sport. However, one after another was secured, and ultimately all but Ruby, and catch her we could not, although a dozen persons were engaged in her pursuit; yet she would not go alone a hundred yards from the wagons, but coursed round and round them, persistently refusing to be cornered or surrounded. For over half an hour she practised this game, and we almost despaired of success, when, doubtless thinking she had given enough trouble, and had a sufficient lease of liberty, she surrendered at discretion.

While we laughed at the fun, certainly the Bechuanas did not, for the thorns were abundant, and the afternoon fearfully hot; in fact, such violent exercise under the circumstances was much to be deprecated, and their sour looks and angry expressions showed that they thought so.

At length all the oxen were in the yoke; each driver, whip in hand, stood waiting for his master's orders, while the foreloper, reim over his shoulder, after the manner of his craft, sat upon the ground, almost under the noses of the leading cattle. With a "God bless you!" a firm shake of the hand, and many expressions of regard, we three Britons parted in this distant and little-known part of the earth. Shall we ever meet again? Possibly, but not probably; still, the secretary of the book of futurity may have made an entry in its pages that such is to be.

The whip again cracks, the driver shouts "Treck!" the treck-tow is made taut; then "Amaga!" is yelled, and the ships of the desert are moving off in their

different directions. Before we had progressed a mile, I noticed very dark clouds rising in the south-west, and soon after became convinced that I heard distant thunder, the muttering of which was like the sound of wild waves washing a far-off strand. A flash of vivid lurid lightning, with forked, erratic course, now rushed down to the earth, and the distant hills of Bamanwatto, previously seen indistinctly in the distance, became obscured.

I feared we were in for a storm, but did not wish to outspan alone where I was, so ordered the guide to hurry on the cattle, so as to be as far from the vley as possible before we should be forced to halt; for your oxen must not treck in wet, else their shoulders will soon become galled.

The bullocks had wonderfully freshened up with their rest and an abundant supply of water, so stepped out blithely.

But that grand and awe-inspiring voice of nature became louder and louder, and the lightning blazed forth as if the heavens would split in twain, yet no rain had fallen upon us. An hour and a half thus passed, and the whole landscape commenced to darken, for the black, voluminous clouds almost kissed the earth, and shut out as effectually as would a pall the faintest glimmer of light.

At length there was a pause, and all nature seemed hushed in awe, fearing to breathe, lest the sound of respiration should hurry the end of the respite, when the electric fluid, with a brilliancy such as I never saw before, descended in a dozen forked lines into the neighbouring velt; and with it came the thunder, awful in its deep intonation, grand in its power, terrifying in its

majesty ; and with it rain—not as we know it, but as if the flood-gates of some great river had suddenly been removed. Of course, for the time being, further progress was impossible, so I ordered a halt, and the patient cattle stood still in their yokes, trembling with fear. The next flash and the thunder came simultaneously, and the oxen became so alarmed, and showed such evident intention of wheeling round and rushing off before the violent deluge, that in a moment I ran to the leaders' heads and made the treck-tow fast to a tree, then, hurrying back, put on the brake and drag. The wagon was safe now, at least from being overturned ; but was it safe from the possibility of other accidents ? I commenced to think it doubtful, for close by the lightning struck a large mimosa, and shivered it into fragments. There was so much iron about the wagon, and the treck-tow was of the same material, that I could not help fearing for the results. Yet I dared not release the cattle, for the moment the strap was removed from their necks, I felt convinced they would rush away into the gloom, far beyond pursuit. As soon as the rain descended, my attendants had hurried under the wagon for shelter, so that all that required doing had to be done with my own hands ; even Umganey refused to obey the orders of his master—in fact, they almost appeared to be in a state of coma through fear. Drenched ? of course I was drenched, and ill beside. Still, I had lots to do, and no one to do it ; so I had to suffer the pelting storm, which beat down upon me with unrelenting fury.

Again another blaze of lightning, and with it a dreadful crash of thunder, suggestive of many deep and serious things. At this moment the thought occurred

to me, that supposing the wagon was struck, what a tremendous explosion there would be if my store of gunpowder became ignited! Such a casualty happening, there could be no doubt that every human being, yes, and animal, near or at present taking shelter under it would be killed.

My fears I communicated to Umganey; to the others he said only three or four words, and in an instant, as if by magic, all tumbled and scrambled out from under the wagon and rushed for shelter to the nearest tree. Taking with me the mar, I followed their example. For over an hour the storm appeared to stand still, in fact it looked as if for that space of time we formed its vortex. It was an awe-inspiring period—a period in which one feels that every breath may be his last, every moment his final one of life. But why fear death, particularly in such a form? It is but the sensation of an instant, and we have but returned to the clay out of which we were moulded. It is not to die we dread, but it is to die unprepared, and how few can say they are ready to meet their God!

But the battle-field where waged the strife, where the hottest part of the action had so long lasted, began to sustain a lull, for the warring elements visibly commenced to move farther to the north. The rain by degrees became lighter and lighter, till it gradually ceased, and the face of the glorious sun was revealed in all his grandeur, rapidly hurrying to submerge himself behind the western horizon. How often, when alone in the Great Thirst Land, when I have felt sad and dull, when I have thought of one whom I loved, and who played me false, of one who held my destiny in her hands, and drove me to be a wanderer, how often have I

thought that I would like to follow the sun in his flight till I sank with him beneath the western wave!

As I wished to put as much space as possible between my cattle and the lions of Seruley Vley, we trecked on till dark, but the roads now were fearfully heavy, so we were compelled to outspan in an exceedingly suspicious place, where trees were numerous and water plentiful, all the requisites that attract the *felidæ*.

What between working hard myself and driving my servants to do likewise, I soon had fuel enough to keep three good fires going the entire night; but several times that I came out of my wagon to ascertain whether they were being attended I found the fires almost out and the boys sound asleep. An utter disregard for any person's property but their own is, I fear, a characteristic of the black population of South Africa.

In the morning what a change had come over all nature! The thirsty velt looked green, the trees were resplendent in their verdant foliage, and animal life seemed to have sprung into existence in every direction. Golden and emerald-winged birds fluttered about, turtle-doves cooed their notes of love from each tree, and the great woodpecker, one of the most resplendent of Africa's birds, awoke the echoes with his industrious tap. Even the jackals seemed to whisk their tails with additional energy, and stein-buck and dikers, in ecstasy of mirth, bounded through the surrounding brush.

Here I had made up my mind to leave the wagon, and ride on to Soshong across the Bamanwatto Hills, but I did not communicate my intention to my people, as I wished to see them started and well under weigh before I left. The distance was great, I think over sixty miles, and I knew not the path; but I had

confidence in myself, and still more confidence in the endurance and will of my tried little mare. By this course I should save about forty miles, and reach Mr. Mackenzie's at least three days before the wagon.

I made my preparations quietly, filled my bag with beltong and biscuit, my pocket with cartridges, and my holsters with tinder, tobacco, &c., for it was quite as probable as not that I should have to sleep out all night, so that when we had advanced about two miles I told Umganey that I was going, and that I held him answerable for everything until the wagon's arrival at Soshong for which they were to make easy trecks. Pleased he did not look, but he said nothing. So taking Ruby in hand I allowed her to choose her own pace, and cantered on towards Bamanwatto, not drawing rein till eight or nine miles were accomplished.

While alone I had ample time for thought. Months I had dwelt in this wondrous land, and the wonderful country I was leaving rose before me as it is, and as it will be, for to the end of time it can never be altered, unless by other than mortal agency, for man cannot make a home, cultivate, and progress without—what this land is almost destitute of—water.

On the higher ridges I traverse the silver-tree (*Leucodendron argenteum*), familiar friend of Table Mountain, makes its appearance, a proof that I am getting either to higher altitudes or farther from the tropics. A very curious sight caused me to halt for some minutes. It was no less than a migration of those extraordinary reptiles called by the French *mille pieds*. The rain had caused birds and beasts in the most miraculous manner to appear, and I suppose had a similar effect on the reptiles. They were crossing the

road eight or ten deep; the advance-guard of this regiment I could not see, and the rear-guard appeared equally distant. Many of them were nearly a foot long, and as thick as a child's wrist. Their skins I had constantly found on the velt previously, bleached as white as snow, and consequently looking at a distance more like a shin-bone of some large mammal than anything else, yet never for a moment had I believed that they existed in such countless numbers. These are not to be confounded with centipedes, for between the two there is no resemblance, except that they both seem to have more legs than they know what to do with.

But what is that patter, patter, coming rapidly over the firm sand behind me? A glance back reveals an old familiar and dear face—it is Bonty, the only dog that has come scathless through the battle. Dear old fellow, he would not let me go alone; possibly he thought he might yet be of assistance; and, faithful to the last, had followed me up to give his aid, if called upon. Between Bonty and the mare existed great affection. When the latter has been feeding, probably half a mile from the wagon, I have seen the former of his own accord go and visit her, remain long enough to say, "How do you do? Feel all right to-day? No suspicious characters about," and then return in the most matter-of-fact way. Bonty was not by any means a gushing dog; but what he said he really meant.

Again Ruby wants to be moving; gaily and easily she covers the ground, so that at half-past eleven I am at the dry river-bed, close to Kama's cattle kraals. After some searching, I find a pool, the mare has a drink, a roll in the sand, and half-an-hour's leave to pick up some mouthfuls of grass. I had finished eating, when

three of the very ugliest natives came and sat before me. They were Barotse, and hailed from beyond the Barotse, a tributary of the Zambesi. The Diamond-fields were their destination. When they return to their native valley, how many miles they will have walked, and what strange sights they will have to report to the primitive people of their distant home !

Just as I was thinking of saddling, some of the cattle-herds made their appearance. I had learnt that there was a path from here to Soshong, but did not know where to find it. Thus I tried to get the necessary information from these people, but all was of no use. Money and tobacco I offered in vain, they would not tell me—no, not they ! So suspicious is the character of these people.

However, I did not despair of finding it, so got in the saddle again, and steered a due west course, occasionally making a little to the south. Path crossed path, and cattle-trail cattle-trail, but none seemed to lead in the direction I wished. At length I got into a deserted village, surrounded by numerous kraals, but even from this there appeared to be no outlet. Still, west was my direction, and I pursued it. No flocks, no “herds,” not a human being had been seen since I left the cattle station. I was wondering over this total absence of population, when, as I topped a ridge, I came upon a number of women and girls, each carrying a load. As soon as they saw me, down went their burdens, and off they scampered. No information to be got from them, that was certain. Another hour’s riding brought me up under the shadow of the hills. I looked for a passage through them—first rode up one ravine, and then another, but found myself on each occasion in a *cul-de-sac*.

Matters began to look serious, for it was getting late, so I took out my comforter—soother of every grief and best of counsellors—my pipe, and called it into confidence. The result was that I concluded that I was still too far to the north. So into the saddle once more. “Come, my little darling, and put your best foot forward,” I said to Ruby; and as fresh and elastic in her gait as she had been in the morning, she struck into her long, easy canter, nor showed signs of pulling up till several miles were traversed. Here the ground was exceedingly wild and rugged, with immense coppies of broken rock rising from the hill-sides; but a fairer view soon opened on the sight—a large extended plain, and a Kaffir village in the distance. “Come on, little one, another effort,” and my enduring, plucky mare, game to the last, answered my call, and soon took me up to the human habitations.

I asked for “Soshong,” I asked for “water,” yet none of these people would answer. What could they fear?—or was it only indifference to a white man’s wants? Disgusted, I turned my back on them, and rode slowly away. A good camping-place for the night it was now necessary to look for, and I was about deciding on the merits of one, when a “herd” made his appearance. He looked at me in amazement, and I stared at him, as I thought I had seen him before, and so I had—it was Mr. Mackenzie’s man, the man who had taken care of my oxen.

In half an hour more I was by the spring at the top of the kloof. There I and my beasts had a long and most refreshing drink. Thirst quenched, we push down past the baboons’ cave, and in a few minutes more the good, kind missionary has me by the hand.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

I LEAVE SOSHONG AND KAMA.

My Wagon reaches Soshong—The poor Oxen glad to see me—Religious Service at Mr. Mackenzie's—Thoughts suggested by it—The Pastor—The Worshipers—My Team broken up and sold off—Among the Traders of Soshong—Geordie—An Illicit Still—Consequence of trying to set up a sly Grog Shop—A great Authority in Literature and Science—King Kama bids me Farewell—A favourite Haunt of Lions—A mighty Hunter—Mr. Finnety—Some of his Exploits—Seven Lions slain in twenty-four Hours—Artfulness of Lions—Sense of Smell *versus* Sense of Sight—How the Lions bag their Victims—Lion not to be feared by Day—Are they Dangerous?—The Leopard's Charge.

It was Saturday afternoon. I stood looking with astonishment and wonder at the droves of cattle and gangs of people passing to and fro between Soshong and the well. Never before had I seen the traffic so great, or had I looked upon it with deeper interest, for was it not civilisation again? Yes, it was so, compared at least with the scenes I had so lately left. But while in a brown study on the future of those who formed the *dramatis personæ* of the scene, the sharp crack of a whip caught my ear. I had not the slightest thought that it could be my wagon, for in the ordinary course of events they would not reach Soshong till next day, and I had left instructions that for the sake of the cattle they were not to hurry; but as I gazed upon the coming *cortège*, the shattered cover to the wagon, the laths that supported it visible for their entire length, the strips of torn canvas flying like streamers in the wind, I knew it

could be no other person's property. I walked down towards the guide, who was acting as driver, and stood upon the roadway. When the cattle came abreast of me they halted, for I believe in me they recognised a kind master. Poor old Swartland looked into my face, Bluebert and Buffle did the same, and reckless, head-strong Poonah gazed upon me more intreatingly than the others—for why, they knew me as their master and friend, and wished to exhibit how they had been over-worked, and desired that they should have that sympathy which can and ought to exist between the brute creation and man.

My poor oxen, they were truly in a sad state, their formerly glossy hides were dust-stained, their eyes lacked lustre, and every movement of their limbs appeared an exertion that they were unable to repeat.

In my heart how I blamed these people! I could have expressed my feelings in very strong language, but it would not have done, so I said nothing, but fell in with the truly mournful cavalcade, and marched up to Mr. Mackenzie's house. What pleasure it afforded me to release my poor toiling beasts was proved by my actively assisting in doing so. After I left my employés they had trecked night and day to reach as soon as possible the capital of Bamanwatto.

Should I have left them? is a question that may well be asked, but I was very far from well, intermittently bleeding at the nose and with a feverish pulse, for the constant strain upon my mind, and my utter loneliness, had worn me out.

It is Sunday, the hour about three P.M. I have been resting in a wagon of Mr. Mackenzie's, when I become conscious that it is time for me to turn out if I mean to

attend worship; and what gives such relief to the weary in heart, the worn-out in body, the depressed in spirits?

I leave the wagon, and in front of the house find four or five stalwart bronzed men assembled; some are seated on the terrace, others lounge upon the steps that lead up to it. I join the group. Few words are spoken; possibly nothing more than a bluff salute. Soon after the worthy minister comes forth and summons us to worship. With heavy tread and serious thoughts we enter the room where it is intended we should listen to Divine truths. Close to the table on which is laid the Word of God sits Mrs. Mackenzie; by her side are her children, bright, happy, and bonnie specimens of what we all were in the days of childhood. How much those innocents do to recall our purer and better days cannot be over-estimated!

At length a psalm is sung, the gruff voice of the wanderer mingles with the gentler cadence of the bonnie bairns. The room receives the melody and hands it to the kloof, and the wild inanimate rocks of Bechuana Land echo in chorus the song addressed to the Christians' God. Ay, far as we are from home, from the land of our fathers, the country of our progenitors, still the religion they believed, they taught, they fought for, is echoing in a kloof in the South African desert.

Our pastor rises; no flowery language is in his mouth, but earnest truths that strike home to the heart, that destroy the thought of argument, for all that hear believe that they are incontrovertible.

Look, reader, into that little room, made neat and attractive by a lady's skill, and see the one broad-shouldered, stalwart adviser, his helpmate and pretty children, joined by several browned and bronzed mature

men, who fear not aught in earth, dread not the desert or its wild beasts, fear not the Great Thirst Land or its hardships, all intently listening, all enjoying, all feeding upon the precepts inculcated in the Holy Book.

The service is over, every one directs his steps to the traders' quarters, but I venture to say that for the first two hundred yards not one speaks, for he has listened to, and inwardly digested, the solemn words of love, kindness, and remembrance that have been expounded in the hearing of all.

At many a sinner's parting scene I have been present, and have felt it so much that I almost wished I had been victim instead of spectator. Still I never remember to have witnessed anything so impressive, so remindful of the termination of our earthly career and of the Great Hereafter as those little assemblies in Mr. Mackenzie's house.

I have much to do, for here I must break up my accessories. Mr. Mackenzie takes back Ruby at the price I paid for her; two days after he was offered, I believe, double the sum by a trader. May she go into good and kind hands, is my earnest wish. If I could have retained her I would have done so, but such was impossible; but Ruby, darling, your memory is dear to me, and ever will be till the end of life. Bonty and poor broken-legged Bob were given to King Kama, Portobello, *alias* Porty, was returned to Mr. Mackenzie, who also purchased six of my bullocks.

Thus disencumbered, I determined with almost empty wagon to cross that portion of the Kalahari that intervenes between Bamanwatto and Sechelle's. In consequence I had my wagon taken down on the flat, where I was detained several days in trying to obtain a

competent driver to guide me over this route, a distance I should think of over one hundred and twenty miles, every yard of which has loose sand inches over the felloes of the wheels, and at this season of the year probably only one drinking-place to be found over the whole course.

While halting here I was thrown a great deal among the traders, and whatever that class may be in other parts of Africa, I can say for one and all of them at Soshong that I considered they honoured me by their society. One story I heard in Soshong, at the time and even now I think so ludicrous, that I will relate it.

Geordie—a well-known character in Soshong—a Highlander by birth, had a most unquestionable love for ardent spirits; not that this is peculiar in itself, for I have known a few Scotchmen who loved whiskey, and when whiskey was not forthcoming, who condescended to drink brandy, even rum, and, at a pinch, would not hesitate to have a mutchkin of gin. Now Geordie had travelled, and his ideas in consequence became enlarged; so that when gin could not be obtained—decent man!—he made no complaint, but took to eau-de-cologne. But, as in Soshong the supply of this was not great, and he saw that his libations were limited in supply, he, like a wise man, and one gifted with forethought, began to consider how the want was to be supplied. Day after day he studied this, and at length he thought—happy thought!—"Make it myself." So he got a Kaffir pot, and built it in over an oven, had a condenser made, and for a worm substituted an old gun-barrel. Kaffir corn was the grain he first employed his ingenuity upon. The quantity was small, and the results commensurate.

Still, although it was only a taste, it was uncommonly good, bit like a mamba, and warmed up to a very pleasant degree the latent cockles of his heart.

So delighted was he with his success, that he at once made a confidant of a leading trader, an intimate friend. The two together got a stock of Kaffir corn, fomented it, and intended going in for a regular wholesale business.

The fire again was lighted: fuel was not scarce, and parsimony on such an occasion was deprecated.

So both Geordie and his friend sat round the still, anxiously waiting for it to commence manufacturing spirits. The delay was considerable, more than was anticipated, and they began to feel anxious, when an explosion took place, and neither knew who punched him. In fact, the formation of our gallant little Celt's legs, which are certainly peculiar, is attributed to this accident. They had quite forgotten that a safety-valve was necessary!

Another little anecdote. At Bamanwatto resided an American, who in his younger days had been a sailor. His birthplace was Salem, Mass., and he desired to be considered a proficient on all subjects connected with astronomy, navigation, &c. This great light of the scientific world informed me one day that he had "shot the sun," a common expression among navigators, which means that they have taken an observation.

I asked him, "How did you do it?"

"With a sextant, of course."

"But don't you think a chronometer, under such circumstances, would be better?" asked I.

"Yes; but what could we do? We had none of the late inventions of science."

Of course, this was a very hard case. "But why did you not use your barometer?"

"I thought of that, but feared the people would not understand it, so did not propose it."

Mr. Clark, our Nantucket sailor, thus figured as an authority on literature and science, and so I left him.

At Soshong, I bade a fond farewell to traders, and particularly to my kind and dear friends, the missionaries, who had done more than I could ever have expected to make me happy and comfortable during my sojourn among them, and more than I shall ever be able to repay.

It was a blistering hot day when I bade adieu to good King Kama's capital; and when I did so, the monarch himself presented me with a bunch of magnificent blood ostrich-feathers; and as I shook his soft, delicate hand, I could not help thinking what a perfect type of an aristocrat he was, even although he was black.

Mashue I reached in thirty-two hours. The road was fearfully heavy, up over the tires of the wheels at every yard, and my faithful, patient bullocks far from strong.

Here, a year or two ago, an incident took place which is worth recording. This vley, Mashue, which never is without water, is a favourite haunt of lions—in fact, I may say, never without a troop, or, more properly, a family, frequenting it. It is passed once in every two weeks by the Bechuanas that carry the mail between Sechelle's and Soshong, and occasionally a traveller finds his way along it; for it is the shortest route to the north-west corner of the Transvaal, but not

as a rule selected, owing to the depth of sand that has to be traversed, and the sparsity of water.

It is a true type of the country that it margins, for it possesses vegetation, with little or no water. It is strange that evidences of numerous springs and vleys that existed in former days are constantly to be found; and old Bechuanas have assured me that they can remember that they always contained water. But where is it now? Drank up by the thirsty soil.

Thus this route is seldom selected by the traveller by wagon; possibly more often by the equestrian.

There is a famous hunter, whose exploits, if they were written, would rival those of Gordon Cumming. He fears not the lion by day, and it is said, not even by night. I have killed all sorts of game, and to the grizzly bear of North America I give the palm for destructive qualities and vitality, and not a few of them have fallen before my rifle; but I must say, if men constituted as I am will follow them or lions into the bush, when darkness shrouds the landscape, they must be possessed of far more pluck, or much better powers of vision, than myself.

To our story. The principal in it, Mr. Finnety, was coming from Sechelle's to Bamanwatto. After the manner of the country, he rode one horse and led the other. At this vley he watered his animals, and pursued his journey, doubtless hoping that night would see him at the end of it. He had not gone more than a mile beyond the water, when two lions sprang from the bush on either side of the road, each seizing a horse. The mount that he was on fell in a moment, and shot him over its head; but the hunter was on his feet in a trivet. With the right barrel he killed the assailant of

the horse he was riding, with the left the brute that attacked the led horse. So quick was the whole done, that neither of the nags was injured.

The exploits of Mr. Finnety would require a chronicler, but another of his performances was told me by Mr. Leask, of Klerksdorp, who was with him at the time, and should not be hid from the world. The night previous, just as it was getting dark, he shot a large white rhinoceros. As he believed his bullet had been well placed, and that in consequence it was only a matter of time for the game to fall, he deferred following it till the morning.

At break of day he started alone to find his quarry, and after going a mile or so found it dead, with three lions around it. Mr. Finnety stalked up within a short distance of them, and killed the trio, each requiring only a single bullet.

Soon afterwards, having discovered elephant spoor, he followed it up, and after noon overtook the herd, and bowled over a couple of tuskers. Retracing his steps to regain his wagon, he had to pass by the dead rhinoceros, and when doing so, found two more lions beside the carcase. These he also killed.

In the morning, Mr. Finnety went out with his people to secure the ivory of the elephants slain the day before. On their route they passed a pool in a dry river-bed, and by it were two large lions. He left his people, and, unsupported, walked up to them and killed them right and left. Thus seven lions fell before his gun in little over twenty-four hours. I should like to know who can show such a bag!

Although I confidently believe that any man with ordinary courage may travel in Africa without the

slightest danger from lions, if he takes proper precautions, still, if you will shoot at them, and possibly in doing so, wound them, look out, for you have a devil incarnate to face, who will only be satisfied with your heart's blood !

The artfulness of lions in effecting the capture of their prey is very wonderful. The inferior races of animals we accredit with instinct, yet deny them reasoning powers. It requires a very acute discrimination to tell where the one terminates and the other begins ; nor have I found any one who would instruct me on the subject.

It is a well-known fact that the sense of smell produces more fear in the animal creation than that of sight. It may be accounted for in this way—when they see a danger they can avoid it by the employment of such means as the Creator has given them ; but when they scent it, they cannot tell how close or far off it may be with any degree of certainty.

However, this peculiarity the lion is well aware of, and thus utilises it. I have said previously that these animals nearly always hunt in troops, or parties, of five, six, or seven. One of these is invariably a mature male—not unfrequently an old one.

Night has set in, the weather is blustery, with possibly rain, and all is dark as ink. The happy family go forth. In their travels they discover a trader or Boer outspanned. The cattle are tied up short to their treck-tow, the end of which is made fast to a tree, and the brake is tightly fastened on the hind wheels. The marauders hold a consultation, and particularly note the wind. Their plan of action is then brought into play. The females and younger and more active males silently

steal off, and secrete themselves down wind, possibly a hundred yards below the unsuspecting bullocks, who are probably all lying down chewing the cud, with their backs to the wind, and their keen eyes staring into the darkness to leeward. The reason of this is that they do not dread danger from behind, for their powers of scent and hearing will give them ample warning; while to their vision alone can they trust for safety from the attack of their stealthy foes in that direction.

At length the party have got to their lurking-places. The old veteran goes to windward of the oxen, and approaches fearlessly towards them, shaking his mane out, that the breeze may carry as much as possible of his effluvia to the intended victims.

When the first taint of this strikes their nostrils, every bullock springs to his feet and faces the danger. Closer and closer approaches the old lion, and the smell of him becomes stronger and stronger. The bullocks simultaneously make a rush; they are, however, well secured, and none succeed in breaking loose. But the tawny, blood-thirsty marauder has not yet played his trump-card. Up he approaches closer, again shakes his mane and roars. That is the climax. If your reims are not the best—and those made of buffalo hide are to be preferred—the violence with which the cattle will rush to avoid the threatening danger will enable them to break loose, when the whole team will tear off down wind, running almost into the jaws of their foes. In such a stampede as this—in fact, nearly in all instances—it is the flank of the victim that is first seized, and several unite together to pull down the prey.

The lion unwounded is not to be feared by day, unless when the sexes are together, or inadvertently you

should chance to come so close upon him when at rest, that he thinks that retreat is impossible, and therefore his only safety is in doing battle. The English sportsman of average pluck need trouble his head therefore very little about them, or treat the probability of danger arising from them as extremely remote. They are, moreover, a large object to aim at, and although doubtless possessed of great vitality, do not have it to the same extent as their beautifully-striped *confrères* of the East. Again, their activity is not equal to that of the tiger, or the grizzly bear of the Rocky Mountains. The charge *par excellence* of all the *felidæ* is that of the leopard. Its velocity is amazing—beyond belief; and while in the act does not present the easiest shot; and its power to do injury, although comparatively a small animal, cannot be overrated.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

A VISIT TO KING SEHELLE.

A Wildebeest Hunt—Sultry Weather—My Spoorer—The Game in Sight—Blown—Bring down a Cow—The Wounded Animal charges my Attendant—Assegaied—A Clean Miss—The Wildebeest gone for Good—Spoor of Giraffe and Quagga—"Kiloe" and "Petsi"—A Shot at Zebra—Success—A Look at my Cattle—My new Ox jumped by a Leopard—Bolts with its Assailant—I Pursue to no Purpose—Certain Fate of the Poor Brute—Lost—Spend the Night "out"—Light a Fire—Stung—Attacked by Red Ants—A Miserable Night—I Find my Wagon—Crowds of Partridges and Turtle-doves—Cruelty to Buffle—His Wretched End—The Lion-bird—*Aw awe*—King Sechelle's Cattle—A Magnificent Roan—Mr. Williams, the Missionary—King Sechelle—His great Grief—Defeat of his Troops—His Queen—Sechelle's Town—An Hospitable Englishman.

HERE at Mashue the bullock so lately purchased, and so badly treated by his companions, came to a most untimely and unexpected end. Wildebeest spoor was so fresh and abundant around us, that I resolved to take my rifle and go in pursuit of them. A bushman who lived in the neighbourhood was easily induced to accompany me as spoorer. Trees were small and far between, while the mapaney brush had given place to the ivory-needle thorn, causing the surface of the country, which was rolling, to be far from enlivening. The sun was unusually hot, the air was oppressive, and the distance seemed to quiver from the mirage effect of the atmosphere. Still, these disagreeables were in my favour as far as finding game was concerned, for the wild animals, quite as much as man, dislike travelling long distances under such uncomfortable circumstances.

I found my attendant thoroughly conversant with his present employment, for he tracked with such rapidity and certainty that it was most difficult to keep up with him. However, like an old experienced greyhound, who refuses to pursue the tortuous winding of the hare, but runs cunning, so did I. But even with this artifice I could scarcely keep the bushman in sight, and if a shot had presented itself, I was so much blown that I doubt very much if I could have held my barrel straight. At length, very much to my satisfaction, I saw the spoorer stop, look back, and wave his hand. Forward I pushed with increased rapidity, till I reached him, when, motioning me to stoop, he took me up the slope of a sand doon, over which, when I looked, I perceived about thirty wildebeest feeding at a distance of about four hundred yards. Deeming this too long a shot to be certain of killing, I endeavoured by signs to make my gillie understand that I wished to get closer to the game. For some minutes my pantomimic actions were not understood, but at length his expression told me that I was comprehended, so we retraced our steps for a short distance, then went across wind for several hundred yards, and again approached the game, a small sand-hill intervening between me and them, on reaching the summit of which I found myself within two hundred yards of several of the herd. I picked out a fat cow, and took sight, but my hand trembled so that I hesitated to fire. I removed the rifle from my shoulder, trusting that in a few seconds I should recover from my shakiness. After drawing a deep, full breath, I again took sight, and fired; the object of my aim dropped. Shoving a fresh cartridge into the breech of my rifle, the bushman and I ran down to despatch the victim. When within

ten yards of the game, it made a violent struggle, and regained its legs, and, certainly surprising me by the activity it displayed, charged straight at my sable attendant. With wonderful agility he skipped on one side, avoiding the onslaught, at the same moment burying his assegai deep in his assailant's flank. The wounded animal did not return to the attack, but at almost an incredible pace followed the route of its comrades. As it passed me, about twenty-five yards off, I fired at its flank, but I was so nervous, so excited, that I believe I made a clean miss.

For more than an hour we spooed this animal, but the only reward granted us for our trouble was the recovery of the assegai, which, from the blood-marks on the blade, must have penetrated several inches. Giving up the pursuit of the wounded wildebeest as futile, we turned our steps to the south, and crossed about half a mile of country, where we came upon giraffe spoor. The trail, which was very stale, told that they were only three-quarter-grown animals. Travelling on farther to the south, we crossed where quagga had just been. The bushman at once took up this spoor, and went off at such a rate of speed that in ten minutes it was a clear case of bellows to mend with me. However, I struggled along through the heavy sand, although I was scarcely able to draw one leg after another, till, through my slow progression, I lost sight of my spoorer altogether. I was debating in my mind whether to go on or turn back, when the bushman returned and the following interesting conversation occurred between us. When he was close to me, I said,

“Kiloe” (Bechuana for wagon), meaning I wished to go to it.

“Petsi,” he answered, and pointed to the west, thus indicating that zebras were close at hand.

Again I said “Kiloe,” and he answered “Petsi,” and showed not the slightest inclination to give way to me. Knowing that these fellows consider an extra ten miles nothing if there is a prospect of getting a good feed, I doubted much the propriety of following him; but when I commenced to look about, and became convinced that without his aid I should never find my way home, I made a virtue of necessity, and followed him. However, I was agreeably surprised—in twenty minutes he brought me within shot of the game, and I bowled over a fine fat mare. My attendant at once set to work, and cut off the carcase as many of the choice morsels as he could carry; so with a load of quite one hundred and twenty pounds of reeking flesh on his back, we retraced our steps homewards.

During our hunt we had at first travelled west, then east, so we had not such a distance to traverse as might have been imagined; and my attendant went as direct for the wagon as a bird would fly to it. Thus about an hour before sunset we were in sight of my cattle. Signalling to the bushman to go home with the meat, I left him, and turned to the right, to have a look at them. As usual, the little ox was almost a quarter of a mile from the others. A “herd” might possibly have rectified this, but as there were no habitations near, and consequently no mealy fields, and the only water to be found for miles was in the vicinity, there was no fear of the oxen straying or doing mischief, so I had permitted the foreloper to remain in camp. Well, I had a look at and a talk with Swartland, Ackerman, Buffle, and, in fact, with all, when I turned my steps towards

the new purchase. I had decreased the distance between it and the other bullocks by one-half, when a leopard sprung out of the bush, and in a couple of bounds lit upon the poor creature's shoulders, seized it with its teeth just in front of the withers, while the claws of one fore-foot were deeply embedded in the neck, those of the other in the back. So sudden was the shock, that the ox fell upon his knees; but in an instant after it had gathered itself together and started off over the velt at a pace that I had never seen bullock make before. Oh that I had Ruby now with me!—what would I not have given for her services at that moment? for I little doubt that I should have been alongside the treacherous, bloodthirsty assailant before it had been carried by its prey half a mile; but it was useless to regret the want of help that it was impossible for me to obtain, so, tired and exhausted as I was, I dragged myself along after the fugitive. While the stricken beast fled, the leopard was still on its back, and no doubt was making such good use of its tusks as soon to cut into its victim's spine. It was the more provoking as the cat appeared anything but a large one—certainly it was not higher than an ordinary-sized water-spaniel, although of course much longer. Well, I followed the spoor of the ox long after I lost sight of both, till I was reminded by darkness setting in that it was time for me to return. Disappointed that I could not render aid to my poor beast, I retraced my steps. Night rapidly closed in the landscape, so I hurried on—as I supposed—in the direction of the wagon. However, there was no moon, so after quite a couple of hours' indefatigable tramping, I became convinced that I was wandering. Yet, in spite of this conviction, I believed confidently that I was near

home, so I ascended one sand-ridge and then another, in the expectation of seeing the illumination of the sky caused by the wagon-fires, but look in what direction I liked, such was not to be perceived. At length I gave the search up as a bad job, and sought for a dead or fallen mimosa. After about an hour's futile exertion, I discovered the latter, made a fire, and laid down with the hope of sleeping; but in this I was disappointed, for soon after trying to seek repose, I was stung by a scorpion on the ankle, which the flames had doubtlessly driven irate from its sanctuary in the fallen tree. This was bad enough, but here my torture did not end, for I was assailed by red ants in such numbers, that it was impossible longer to remain lying on the ground. In consequence I got up, piled more wood on the fire, and went so far as to consider myself the most unfortunate man on the face of the earth. However, no wild animals came near me. In the distance I heard several hyænas wail, and numerous jackals laugh, but they were a long way off, possibly holding carnival over the body of my slaughtered ox. When day broke I picked myself up, and with anything but feelings of regret left my uncomfortable bivouac. When the sun rose I walked towards it, and in a short time found my own and the bushman's spoor of yesterday when in pursuit of the wildebeest. Taking the back trail, soon after I observed a line of white smoke perpendicularly ascending to the clouds. As I was not aware that any of the natives resided near here, I concluded that it must be from the fires at my wagon. In this surmise I was correct, so reached my belongings by eight o'clock, when I found that Umganey and the driver had gone in pursuit of me. However, they returned about

noon, having come across my spoor and tracked me home.

I have never in my life seen such quantities of Namaqua partridges as frequent this vley—morning and evening they come and go in almost uninterrupted flocks of thousands; while turtle-doves in very nearly equal numbers are also visitors. With a shot-gun any person might have killed hundreds of these beautiful birds, for they were so tame that they would barely clear my head by more than a few feet, so anxious were they to satisfy their thirst.

From here we made two trecks through a country more densely wooded than any I had lately passed. As it got dark, when still half a mile from water, one of my oxen, big Buffle, lay down, and would not rise. Believing that a short rest would again put him on his legs, I went forward to examine the trail. When I returned—possibly after an absence of half an hour—a queer smell, as of burnt meat, pervaded the neighbourhood. This I discovered was caused by the cruel, unfeeling boys having lit a fire under the poor ox to make him get up. Such torture was of no avail—the poor creature could not get up, and consequently had to submit to the inhuman device of its persecutors. Thus it had to be left behind, with the hope that it might be able to be driven on in the morning. During the night the hyænas and jackals made a great disturbance. As the quarter whence their voices came was that in which poor old Buffle lay, I surmised, and truly, that I should never see him again alive. When I returned at sunrise to bring him up, alas! nought remained but a very imperfect skeleton to point out where he had lain down.

The following evening, soon after sunset, a new moon was seen rising over the neighbouring hills. Its crescent was not larger than a thread, but that was quite sufficient to cause the boys to make a night of it, so they did not sleep, and kept me from doing so by their continued lullalooing and clapping of hands.

Next day we trecked through very heavy sand, between two ranges of hills. The slopes were covered with trees, and the scenery pretty, but monotonous. At eleven a.m. we reached the vley, where we expected to find water, but it was dry. Nevertheless, we outspanned and rested for three hours. While eating breakfast one of the crested slate-coloured birds always associated by the natives with lions perched on a neighbouring tree, and incessantly kept uttering its discordant notes—*aw awe*. As I knew no lions were near, and that he was fibbing to try and frighten us, I took up my Martini-Henry and fired. The distance was too great to think I would hit the object of my aim, but the gun was true, and my sight more correct than anticipated, for the unfortunate fell to the ground, with its body shattered into pulp.

Next morning about ten o'clock we reached a large vley. All, or at least a large proportion of old King Sechelle's cattle were gathered here, for the Kaminyani had been successful in their war against him, and had even dared to change their tactics from those of defence to those of aggression. Here the herds were supposed to be safe, and a splendid troop they were, numbering I should suppose several thousand. While asleep under my wagon, a trader of the name of Solomon, accompanied by an after-rider, arrived. He was *en route* to Bamanwatto. The horse he rode was a magnificent roan—in

fact, one of the best-looking nags I had seen in the country. The purchaser being very proud of it, and wishing to show me its paces, attempted to put it through them, when it bucked him over its head. Fortunately no injury was done to the rider.

We trecked that afternoon and the next morning, when having arrived at the outskirts of the gardens that for miles surround Sechelle's town, I walked on, and arrived at Mr. Taylor's store in time to be invited to dine with him. He has lately married an English lady, whose sister resides with her. Their life must be truly dull and monotonous.

Mr. Williams, the missionary stationed here, showed me much kindness and attention. He had heard from Bamanwatto of my coming, and insisted on my making his house my home. What I say now for one, I say for all, that a kinder, more hard-working, and self-denying people than the missionaries of the distant interior of South Africa I never became acquainted with.

At Mr. Taylor's I slept, for I had met him first, and he had pressed upon me his hospitality, which I continued to enjoy during the remainder of my sojourn here.

King Sechelle called upon me the day after my arrival. He is a remarkably handsome, stout man, about sixty-five years of age. But for his colour—a dark brown—he more resembles a good representative of the Anglo-Saxon than a Bechuana. He is at present in great grief, for his troops, led by his son, have been repulsed, and the successful enemy have made numerous incursions into his territories, where they have committed fearful barbarities. The last tidings of a defeat were brought him when holding counsel in his kotla.

As soon as he heard the unwelcome news, he is said to have thrown off his outer garments, and in the most violent language accused his people of having become women, of having forgotten the deeds of their fathers, and of having descended to such a degree that only entitled them to be slaves. This peroration he concluded by a regret that he was born so long ago, that he was now unable to take command of his troops in person.

The day after Sechelle's visit I returned it, and was introduced to his queen. She is also exceedingly pleasing in appearance and manner, although quite as stout as her husband. Their residence is a large, well-built cottage, with a wide verandah, surrounded by a compound of about an acre and a half. The interior of their dwelling was clean, but I could not say tidy, for there were musical boxes, books, telescopes, wind instruments, guns, swords, and articles of furniture and clothing huddled together in one indistinguishable mass.

Before departing, the old king presented me with a beautiful caross, and other curiosities, and came down at the hour of my leaving, accompanied by hospitable and kind-hearted Mr. Williams and Mr. Taylor, to see me start. The natural position of Sechelle's village would be very strong if it were not commanded by an adjoining height, but in case of an attack it would doubtless be fortified. After a rest here of four days we started at three o'clock in the afternoon of the fifth, our numbers being further reduced by a man, an ox, and a dog. We trecked all night, and reached water at eight o'clock in the morning. The pasture around this halting-place was excellent and abundant, so I did not inspan till late the next afternoon. Here I met

the Englishman who had treated me so hospitably at Lieufontein. His heart was as generous as ever, for he gave me an immense supply of vegetables, at the same time expressing numerous regrets that he was not journeying in the same direction as myself. When he started for Sechelle's, I trecked to the south. Shall I ever meet this genial, kind soul again? It is not impossible, but very improbable. Whether or not, I wish him happiness and prosperity.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

EXPERIENCES AT THE DIGGINGS.

A Copper Hill—Refreshing Dip—Poetry *not* in my Line—Guinea Fowls innumerable—Shooting a Leopard—Applauded by Monkeys—Ruined Huts—Gifts that didn't Pay—At Moiloes again—Clear of the Great Thirst Land—At Zeerust again—Mr. Wisbeach's Kindness—At Klerksdorp again—Parting with Umganey—Faithful to the End—Attacked by a Deserter—Arrival at Kimberly—Jarvey No. 1 won't take his Fare—Jarvey No. 2 does—The Cabman an old Friend—High-class of Emigrants—Splendid Material for a Cavalry Regiment—Mr. Balfour—Curious Coincidence—Mr. Balfour's Letter—Documentary Evidence touching the Death of the Basuto Pony and an Ox.

NEXT day we failed to find water where water was expected, so we made but a short halt. Towards sunset we trecked down the side of a hill. This incline was a mass of pure copper. Even the loose rubble that lay upon it was the same; and when the wheels grazed it, so soft was the metal that they sliced off pieces an inch or more in length, and quite a quarter of an inch thick.

About ten in the afternoon on the second day we reached Aspho (vulture) fontein; here we found an abundant supply of beautiful clear water, and I enjoyed the luxury of a bath—not one of your cat's-wash kind of affairs that for so long I have had to put up with, but a regular swim in eight or nine feet of water. This stream passes through a deeply-wooded kloof. The scene recalled a poem written before I found out that

versification was not my *forte*; still, here it is—at least, a line or two:—

“Where the bare slopes of rocks converging fell
On either hand into a craggy cleft,
And the free, fervid sun flowed down the dell,”

and so on. Well, I had scarcely got dressed when Umganey came to inform me that plenty guinea-fowls were to be had, so I went and sought them. In all my previous experience I never found these birds so abundant—they were not in millions, as an American friend said the hornets were that sallied out upon him, but without exaggeration they were in thousands. Having only a rifle, and still being very shaky, I fired at least thirty shots for the five or six I killed; and every time the report echoed up the kloof, a troop of baboons chattered, as if in applause at the row I was so unsatisfactorily making.

Among some rocks I sat down to have a look at my *claqueurs*. As people go they were not a bad specimen of their race. But what on earth is the matter? there they are scampering up the dell to the most inaccessible crags. I have not alarmed them—I doubt if I could; but something has—what is it? Looking behind a point of rock I see a creature taking stock of me—a pair of hazel eyes and two prick ears. They are real bonnie to look at, while the expression of face is so earnest. I raise my Martini-Henry, and take a steady shot. I have not much to fire at—less than the size of my hand, still the missile speeds straight, and the winsome beast, with all his wondrous spots and markings, is a corpse. And would you believe it?—of course you do not—the baboons chat-

tered applause, for they knew just as well as I did that their enemy had been slain.

From here we trecked through the ruins of several deserted villages, but war had driven away the inhabitants, and time had destroyed their dwellings. What once were their fields are now desolate wastes; what once were their houses are a home for the hyæna, the bat, or, worse still, the hideous, bloated reptile.

After a long day's treck we arrived at night beside a large pond, formed by banking up the course of a rivulet. Several of the inhabitants came out to welcome me; to my surprise many spoke English. Shortly after dark I was sent a present of meat and vegetables, but, incredible as it may appear, so many came to see me eat and assist me in the performance of so necessary and not uncommon a duty, that I discovered that these presents were far from a paying game.

Next morning at break of day I got the cattle in, and when I took them out of the yoke I was in front of the blue gum-trees before Mr. Jansen's house at Moiloes. Thus ends my wandering in the Kalahari desert, for here I leave it and enter the Transvaal. The agony that my poor cattle, my boys, and I had endured in the Great Thirst Land was now practically at an end. Our sufferings had been intense, but we had come, thank God, safely—or at any rate tolerably so—through it all. Truly may that region be called the Thirst, nay the Great Thirst, Land, for there, more than in any other country I have ever visited or travelled in, are unfortunate animals and miserable natives subjected to periodical visits of excruciating scourges; and the tremendous hardship is that no amount of experience can possibly avail to prevent the recurrence of the

unmitigated evils of hunger and thirst—which are, of all the pangs to man, and child, and beast, the worst. The good missionary, who distinctly told me that he never expected to see me return, was the essence of hospitality; but I was anxious to get to Zeerust, for there I knew were letters awaiting me, so I trecked with the wagon till about half the distance was traversed, when to my disgust I discovered that the tire of one of my hind wheels was all but off. Thus I had again to turn wagon-wright, remove the wheel and have it there and then pegged, which operation is accomplished by driving wedges of wood between the tire and felloe. When again ready for the road I visited an adjoining farm-house, hired a horse, and galloped into Zeerust, very much to the surprise of the inhabitants, who were under the impression that I had died some time back, a report to that effect having been spread through the community about two months before.

Again I visited the little church, again I dined with Mr. Reed, and as I trecked south I stopped at Jacobsdal. Here that dear, kind-hearted gentleman, Mr. George Wisbeach, met me. He had left Bamanwatto the day after I did; but although he had the longer route to traverse—that, namely, by Crocodile river—he had beaten me in the trek by two days.

Well, it is no harm telling it, but I was very hard up, and could not get money till I got to Klerksdorp. Accordingly I had been prevented from laying in a stock of beef for myself and boys. Wisbeach somehow or other found this out, so he took me on the velt where his oxen pastured, and shot the fattest for my use. Nearly the whole world knows me now; and

although I have met with great kindness wherever I have travelled, I cannot recall one instance of disinterested generosity that I felt more keenly than that of George Wisbeach.

Three days took me to Leichtberg. There I took the post-cart to Klerksdorp, leaving the wagon to follow, for my new driver was a careful, steady man. About two o'clock of a bitterly cold morning I took my seat beside the driver, and as we rattled over the velt I heard for the last time the mournful notes of the hyæna, sounds that had for long been familiar to me as the merry laugh of children within the pale of civilisation. At three in the afternoon we halted at Hartebeestfontein. Mr. Doherty, the proprietor of one of the stores, insisted on my dining with him, and a grand dinner he gave out of courtesy to me and all my fellow-passengers. At sunset I was again in the cart, and at half-past nine was once more the guest of Mr. Leask. Never appeared people more astonished than they seemed when I walked in among them, for they, as well as the people in Marico, believed that I had been killed. Even in this uninhabited land, how rapidly does Dame Rumour flit about!

Klerksdorp is situated on a river more Scottish than African in appearance; while behind the village rises a rugged stretch of hills, very irregular in outline, and reaching to an elevation of about 1,000 feet. After traversing this ridge, the open velt lies before the traveller, but a totally different velt from that which he finds about Marico, for here all is grass, not a stick or shrub being found on the surface of the plain—in fact, so destitute is it of larger vegetation, that, as in the big plains between the Drackenberg and Vaal river,

no other fuel can be found than the dried droppings of cattle. It is fortunate that lions do not abound where the means of firing is so scarce. If they did, they would certainly have it nearly all their own way.

Bidding my kind friends at Klerksdorp adieu, in thirty-six hours I reached Bloomhoff, for I had sold my wagon and cattle to Mr. Leask. But before I jump over that distance, let me say a word about my parting with Umganey. When I paid him, Mr. Leask explained to him that I was going back to my own home, and offered him employment, at four pounds a month, to take charge of his cattle, and what do you think the fellow said? "I have never had but one bass, and while I live I will serve no other." For the day or two before I started he hovered round me—even when in my bedroom he would steal in and fill my pipes, or curl himself up in one of the carosses, and although apparently asleep, I could note the big black eyes watching me. At length the hour for getting in the post-cart came. My baggage I had seen safely stowed away, and in another moment I would have taken my seat, when the poor fellow threw himself on the ground and placed my foot on his head, then rising, rushed off up the hill-side. Dear faithful Umganey, that was the last I saw of him. One darling idea he seemed to entertain was that I would go back with him to the Umphelosi, and live among his people. He promised me if I did so, that I should be a great chief. How could the poor half-starved wanderer whom I had picked up at Umganey promise so much? Yet Kama told me that he was a chief's son. Whether so or not, he had as noble a heart as ever beat in human breast.

The second day from Klerksdorp we reached Bloom-

hoff, a miserable village of a dozen houses. Here I was attacked by a fellow who was a deserter from the 36th Regiment. He was assisted by three or four other scoundrels. Well, they between them pommelled me into a cocked-hat (any decent boy at home could have done so then), drove the post-cart off without me, and stole my watch, chain, and money, thus leaving me 150 miles to trudge on foot, without food, and all the surrounding coppies covered with snow; but I did it. Exhausted, footsore, and dirty, I entered Kimberly just as people were leaving afternoon service on Sunday. All stared at me and looked surprised. At this I could not be astonished, for when had such a tatterdemalion been seen before? However, a cab passed: I hailed it. Jarvey asked me politely to show him the colour of my money. As I was unable to do this, he looked for another fare.

A second cab I called. "You bees a rummy looking cove to ride in a conve'ance," said he; and I agreed with him there and then. "Take me to the 'Carnarvon,' at Dutoitspan." A quarter of an hour landed me at that establishment, but, would you believe it, they would not admit me till I gave my name! As soon as their request was complied with, clothes, food, wine, tobacco were all forthcoming. The cabby looked at me now with even more surprise. He had a glass of champagne at my expense, then got into his seat, meditatively pulled on his gloves, slowly took the reins in his hand, and said *sotto voce*, "Who would have thought it!"

That cabman was in the habit of coming to see me daily after this little episode, and more than that, he blacked my boots unbidden, and brushed my clothes.

He had once been a private in the 11th Hussars, and few better or kinder hearts ever beat under a shell-jacket or wore a sabre.

But in alluding to soldiers, I would say a word or two about them. I believe there is no place in the world where such splendid specimens of the Briton are to be found as at the Diamond Fields. The majority are not only the sons of gentlemen, but gentlemen by education. The reason that such a high type of emigrant should be found there doubtlessly is, that it is a very expensive journey from England. If I had to raise a couple of cavalry regiments, there I would certainly go for recruits. Look across the way towards the Post Office and note that group, all young, all good-looking; and you can safely feel assured that the grass country of the Midland Counties knows them well, that its hedges, woods, and copses have echoed with their stirring, soul-inspiring "Tally-ho!" That broad-shouldered man with the heavy moustache and good-natured expression of countenance, what a splendid heavy dragoon he would make! The other conversing so animatedly with him, light enough still to ride under eleven stone, would he not make the most perfect of Hussars or Lancers? *There* is the material such as no other land can produce, *there* is the quality, yet we do not know how to make use of it. Although many of these splendid specimens of the *genus homo* have now to work hard, to toil with hands that never previously were acquainted with anything harder than a kid glove, still they look in no way dispirited, but laugh at the last *bon mot*, or narrate their latest escapade with as much gusto as a year or two before they may probably have done on the porch of their club in Pall Mall, or

strolling up the gentle incline of St. James's Street. "But will they a' come back again?" and, doubtless, may be added, "And mithers grat as they marched awa'."

I met many friends and received the offer of much hospitality when at the Fields, but from the state of my health I was compelled to consider myself an invalid. In consequence of the rumour of my illness, an Episcopalian clergyman called upon me. He was a most charming person, very young, very earnest, and a delightful conversationalist. During my intercourse with him quite a little episode took place—so improbable that I would fail to tell it if I could not present the testimony of the following letter. It occurred in this way. Mr. Balfour (for I do not hesitate to give his name, when what I narrate only proves how earnest, sincere, and self-denying he is in his labours) casually inquired of me if, in all my trials and struggles, escapes from death, where life was all but sacrificed, I ever felt serious?

"Yes," I replied; "I do sometimes."

"When, and where?" were his further queries.

"I will tell you—I don't mind doing so to you, but it is a subject I usually taboo. In one of the Midland Counties of England there is a little church, in my opinion the most perfect place of worship I ever entered. Of a calm summer evening, when all nature lies in repose, when the husbandman plods homewards from his toil, and the happy-hearted children, released from school, laugh and sing, and scamper about in excess of enjoyment, I used to mount my horse (for it was some miles off) and ride to this holy place, and there seek and receive comfort for my past

offences. I never spoke to its pastor in my life, still knew him well by appearance, but it was the place and its surroundings that ever invited me to remember that there was a Hereafter to follow the present life."

The day for my departure arrived. I was about to take my seat on the box of Messrs. Cobb and Co.'s coach, when Mr. Balfour came up to bid me good-bye, at the same time handing me a letter, which I was not to read till some miles of my journey had been accomplished. This I faithfully promised and strictly adhered to.

The letter ran thus :—

"DUTOITSPAN,

"GRIQUALAND WEST,

"June 21st, 1876.

"DEAR CAPT. GILLMORE.—I did not wish to disturb people last night, so came away without bidding you good-bye. I hope you will have a prosperous journey and find your belongings well at home. Mind you go to that little church again. I am very fond of the place, and it was Mr. Skinner who prepared me for Confirmation and for Holy Communion. When I was reading the 104th Psalm last night it made me think of you, and the lions, and the birds, &c. Dwelling on the beauties of the natural world seems to raise one's thoughts to Him who made these things. Surely it is worth while giving one's heart to Him, fighting against our evil passions and wicked thoughts with the strength we may get from Him, when we see how great and beautiful He is, and think what He may have in store for us. Forgive me for writing in this strain. I do long that "men would praise the Lord for His goodness" and serve Him faithfully. If we are truly sorry for our sins He will forgive us; if we give ourselves up to His holy teachings He can make our characters more beautiful than the plumage of those lovely birds, for He knows where we have gone wrong, and being our Maker, can put us right, only we must work with Him and bravely put away all that displeases Him. If you are not angry with me by this time write

me a line from the Cape or Grahamstown. If you are, I am sorry, and ask you to forgive my rashness as a stranger writing to you on these matters. Good-bye.

“Yours faithfully,

“FRANCIS BALFOUR.

“Many thanks for your winnings!”

The birds alluded to were eight new species of bee-eater and honey-birds collected by myself, and none of which had ever been classified by any naturalist. The last passage, “Many thanks for your winnings,” referred to my giving to the local charity some pounds I won at whist. For although an inveterate bad gamester, and without the slightest love for gambling, I almost invariably win when induced to become a member of a card-party.

Two other documents I will also append. They give the reader, and more especially the future traveller, some idea of the kind of certificate he must be armed with to recover the price of an ox or horse guaranteed by the vendor against lung or horse sickness.

“BAMANGWATO,

“8th May, 1876.

“This is to certify that a bay horse, with black points, died on Crocodile River, on the 5th March, of horse-sickness, Spencer Drake and Fred. Drake having been present at the time. Said horse the property of Captain Gillmore.

“(Signed) GEO. GORDON.”

“BAMANGWATO,

“8th May, 1876.

“This is to certify that a dark brown ox died of lung-sickness, on the 7th March, at Crocodile River. Said ox the property of Captain Gillmore, and purchased in Zeerust of Oswald Bagger.

“(Signed) GEO. GORDON.”

The first-mentioned was my faithful Basuto pony, that had carried me so well from Natal; the latter one of the oxen purchased from the "Count," *alias* "Uncle," the signer being the good, kind-hearted little Scot who got blown up, or down, if you like it, when trying to distil whiskey.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

THE DIAMOND-FIELDS—HOMEWARD BOUND.

A fierce Sun—The Diggers—Their Homes—The Pans—The Machinery—The Labourers—How they will work for the Musket, Great-Coat, and Blanket—Distance from their Home—Effects of the Diamond-Fields—Kimberly—The Buying and Selling of Diamonds—I leave Dutoitspan—The Coach—Drivers—German and English Jews—Their Resolution touching Liquor—How they keep it—Other Passengers—Unamiable Englishman—Affable Wife—One-legged Boer—Blessed Baby—Hints to Travellers about Babies—Handsome Girl in the District—Orange River—In Old Colony again—Boers and Kaffirs—Splendid Qualities of the Latter—On board Ship—Holly again—The last of “the Red, White and Blue”—The Ship’s Company—The Honourable Member for Matabele—Finis.

BEFORE leaving the Fields, a short description of the two celebrated diamond-diggings of Dutoitspan and Kimberly may be interesting to the reader. Imagine an immense undulating sandy plain, very sparsely covered with grass, with the horizon here and there interrupted with sterile hills, while nearer at hand occasional coppies are to be found. A quivering glow makes distant objects appear to tremble, and exaggerates them to many times their proper size ; while the sun from a cloudless sky pours down its powerful rays upon the landscape, for not a tree to afford shelter is to be found. By Jove, and what a sun it is ! so cruel, so uncompromising, so powerful in its strength ! such a sun as the mariner in tropical seas would dread to encounter even more than death, if adrift in an open boat or upon a raft. No language can describe the luminary as seen here, no

imagination can grasp the picture. And it is here that men come, men of education, men of good family, to sweat and toil, hour after hour, and day after day, fear and hope racking their bosoms in pieces, to gain sufficient of the world's wealth, that when they turn their steps homewards, and reach the thrice blessed land of their birth, they may be able to support an aged mother, devoted sister, or possibly one dearer than even the closest of relatives.

The population live in tents, or huts of wood or corrugated iron. Not unfrequently the same dwelling may be seen composed of both materials. Ingenuity and management have made some of these primitive dwellings not uncomfortable. This is more particularly to be noted when a wife is at the head of the establishment, for ladies have found their way out here as well as to less inaccessible parts of the earth. The want of water prevents almost any attempt at gardening, and how much would a few flowers do to relieve the eye-exhausting monotony! But I learnt on my visit that, for ten months, not a shower had fallen upon this sun-baked land, so that water had risen to the enormous price of three shillings a bucket.

The pans or diggings from which the diamonds are procured are nothing more or less than enormous holes. Kimberly mine, the larger of the two, I should imagine between three or four hundred feet deep, the sides being at about an angle of forty-five degrees, while the distance across the top cannot be less than three hundred yards. Along the outer edge are innumerable windlasses, some worked by hand, some by horse-power, and others by steam, from each of which descend wire ropes to the respective claims. On these ropes the

buckets that bring to the surface the *débris* in which the gems are found, ascend, making the sides and top of the pit look like a deserted rabbit or badger earth, over the entrance to which an industrious spider has made a web.

Nearly all the labourers are black, a large portion coming from the tributaries of the Zambesi, or the adjoining countries beyond, supervised by a white or Hottentot overseer, whose duty it is to see that none of the stones are purloined. No easy task, you may be sure, among such a heterogeneous assembly. Side by side may be seen labouring Matabele, Macalaca, Mashoona, Barotse, and Bechuana, for all tribal quarrels, feuds, and family discords are thrown aside here, that each workman may the sooner obtain the coveted musket, great-coat, and blanket, and thus be able to return at an early date to his native land. To accomplish this a thousand, possibly more, miles have to be traversed. Still undaunted, they will persistently walk day after day, from night till morning, endure heat, thirst, and hunger, liable to be attacked by savage men and more savage beasts, and consider they have been amply rewarded if they succeed in taking their valuables home with them.

The Diamond-Fields have done much to civilise South Africa, and day by day are doing more. But for them the heathen in their benighted regions would be as ignorant of civilisation and our race as they were in the days of David Livingstone. What is to be the ultimate result it is not easy to prophesy, yet it can scarcely fail to be otherwise than beneficial.

The principal thoroughfares in Kimberly, where the shops, stores, banks, taverns, and hotels are situated,

are well worthy of a visit, for there are few more crowded haunts of trade anywhere to be found. All is bustle and excitement; while the roads are fairly blocked with wagons and carts of every shape and size, for supplies have to be brought from a distance, and there are nearly fifty thousand souls that have to be fed.

No person is allowed to buy or sell diamonds without a Government permit. A breach of this law is punishable by imprisonment, fine, or even by flogging. It is absolutely necessary in such a community to have severe laws enacted, and power to enforce punishment in case of an infringement of them; but the population have heretofore proved themselves law-abiding, loyal citizens, so no collisions have occurred between the authorities and the people. Another reason, and one I have mentioned before, is that no place was ever previously settled by so respectable a class of emigrants or colonists.

The morning was bright and clear when I took my seat between the two drivers on the box of Cobb and Co.'s coach at Dutoitspan. For this part of the world not one Jehu is wanted, but a pair, the one on the nigh side handling the ribbons, the other on the off wielding the great cumbersome whip. The conveyance is an immense thing, seating nine inside and five passengers outside. In appearance it much resembles one of those swinging, jolting Noah's-ark affairs that in Boston and New York transfer passengers from the steamboats and trains to the hotels. However, they are as strong as wood and iron can be put together, and if not crowded are very comfortable. Messrs. Cobb and Co. will be remembered by many Australian friends as the enterprising

firm who first established a respectable line of conveyances between Melbourne and Ballarat. Here they have accomplished the same purpose, and in reward carry the mails and treasure.

Six good horses are in front of us. With Mr. Balfour and numerous other friends I shake hands for the last time, and precisely at nine the horn sounds, the Kaffirs let go the heads of the steeds, and the giant whip delivers one of its musket-like reports, and we are off, more than five hundred miles lying between us and the diamond-crested blue waves of the Indian Ocean.

Our drivers were both queer-looking fellows. The senior looked like a Macao (near Canton) Portuguese, the junior like a good specimen of the Kaffir. Both spoke English, had many amusing anecdotes to narrate, were very accommodating, and remarkably civil, to which eulogium I may further add that they were most skilful in all matters connected with their profession.

But behind me are seated four characters, two are German Jews, and two English Jews. They have all made money, and are returning to their respective native lands, brimful of good spirits, and, I fear, bad whiskey. They sung well, and the *répertoire* of one or two was extensive, but after the most pathetic song, the choicest *morceaux* of all the latest operas, especially if we were rushing up to one of the taverns where horses were changed, with one accord all would break out in deep bass voice with a chorus about never getting drunk any more. The air to which it was chanted being that of the march in *Faust* on Valentine's return, it will easily be understood that the emphasis and "go" of the Bacchanalian ditty were considerable.

So sincere were they in this intention that as soon

as the horses were pulled up, each, without a moment's delay, ordered a glass of three-star French, a toss-off of Geneva, or a *soupe* of Old Colony rum, otherwise "Cape smoke."

At the commencement of a stage they were invariably in low spirits, towards its termination, however silent they had been for an hour or two, music would recommence, finishing as the horses were pulled up with the chorus already alluded to.

Another of our passengers was a short, stout young Englishman, with a don't-tread-on-my-corns air, a great stickler for his rights, and a disliker of the fine arts in general, and music in particular. A day or two before leaving the Diamond-Fields he had committed matrimony. His wife, a fair Africander girl, was a perfect contrast to the husband, good-tempered, affable, with an extraordinary facility of looking at the bright side of everything, and treating the numerous inconveniences and mishaps as a very good joke. Then there was inside a very fat Boer with only one leg, which the rest of the inmates were always begging him to take a little paternal care of, as it invariably was getting in somebody's way. Another, who would have egg beat up in sherry whenever we halted, scarcely calls for notice; but I can't forget a blessed baby, whose lungs were so powerful, although its body was small, that its voice overtopped conversation—even singing—when it chose to pipe up, and that was at least twenty-three out of the twenty-four hours. I have heard it said that troublesome babies invariably turn out great men, this one, doubtless, has a brilliant future in store for it, and when it achieves greatness, or has greatness thrust upon it, I trust it will remember that I travelled with it on

this occasion, and never hinted even in the most remote manner that it was a nuisance. When you travel never abuse the babies, it is a mistake; but when they get a most violent attack of tantrums on, mildly suggest that they probably have a stomach-ache, or a pin sticking in them. You will at once be put down as a person of feeling, and possessed of an unusual amount of common sense. In fact, you might not be surprised to hear it said *sotto voce*, "What an excellent husband that young man would make!"

As we approached a halting-place one of the drivers informed me that the handsomest girl in that part of Africa resided there, that she was daughter of the proprietor of the tavern where we should stop, and that I was certain to see her, as she invariably came out to the coach for orders from the passengers.

The young lady in question was very lovely; to Andalusia admirers would imagine she owed her birth, but in this they would be mistaken, for she was an Africander of Irish parentage.

The horses are at length in, and away we fly south over the velt, with six as wild unbroken steeds before us as ever carried harness. For four or five miles they never slacked their pace, but finally the heavy sand and heavier coach commenced to tell, and the beauties sobered down to a steadier pace.

We have almost crossed the great Karoo Desert, high mountains bound the southern horizon, but before reaching them, when we shall be in the Old Colony, the great Orange River or Grand Gariep has to be crossed. This we did about nine in the morning, after enjoying an excellent breakfast at the hotel on its northern shore.

This magnificent river is worthy of a description, let me endeavour, therefore, to picture it. Its banks are remarkably steep, in many places precipitous, and covered with dwarf trees and brush as brilliant in their foliage at this season of the year as an American forest after the first autumnal frost. As far as I could see to the east or west high mountains marked its course, many of them having a mile or two of plain between their slopes and the water, while others, less considerate, projected into the river with dark frowning headland or rocky precipice. The Orange River, at the ferry, must be a quarter of a mile broad, while just above is a noble pool double that width, with some remarkably picturesque rocks at its entrance. The water is a brilliant cobalt blue, thus giving it an unnatural look in the eyes of Europeans. At this portion it assuredly is navigable for vessels of deep draft; what distance it continues so I cannot say, but where it debouches into the sea the channels are so shallow that it is currently believed that the greater part of its water passes into the ocean under the sand. If it were not for this what a grand thoroughfare it would have been for transporting to market the immense quantities of produce that could be raised on the almost unlimited plains that margin its upper sources!

The incline from the ferry till level country is reached is both long and steep, so the passengers, with the exception of the Boer with the unruly leg, walked to its summit. Hurrah, for the Old Colony! for we are in it now, and the horses hear the shout and tear along at racing pace. One town after another is passed, all pretty, but Cradock most so. After this a long stretch of velt is crossed, when we commence to enter wood-clad

hills, the steep and rugged road often scarped out of their sides. Here many of the hardest battles were fought between our troops and the natives, and in many of the actions we had not much to boast of, yet the Kaffirs in those days were only armed with assegais, while our infantry soldiers had muskets, and in the majority of instances were supported by cavalry and artillery. Now that the natives are well armed how would the battle go? Very doubtful indeed I should think the issue of the struggle, if fought in bush or rocky ground. I told several leading politicians and gentlemen, when the late war between the Boers and Kaffirs took place, that the former would inevitably be beaten. Not one believed me, their answer invariably was, "The Boers have always thrashed them, and will assuredly do so again." "Yes, when the native had but an assegai; but now he has a rifle or musket, and knows how to use it. Mark my words, the Boer will be worsted in the coming fight." Who was right and who was wrong is now a matter of history.

I hope I shall never see English soldiers engaged with such an enemy, for the natives with their present arms are as fine light infantry as can be found—courageous, active, and enduring, and, better than all, requiring little or no commissariat. Can it be otherwise with men who follow the chase from childhood upwards, with courage enough to attack the most dangerous animal, and stealth sufficient to approach the most wary? Africanders would be better than Englishmen in such a war, but native troops led by Africander officers would be better still. It is useless to say more on this subject—a subject we will find a serious one at no distant day—for to give the offer of a word of advice to one of our

home officials in office is but to lay yourself open to incivility.

Grahamstown, a charming place of residence, beautifully situated, was reached the evening of the sixth day. All of us were exhausted and in want of a "wash-up" and a rest, so a quiet room and comfortable bed were the luxuries most required, and I had the fortune to secure both.

After two days' rest, a journey half by road, half by rail, took me to the Bay (Port Elizabeth), where, thoroughly broken down and worn out, I obtained accommodation at the Phoenix Hotel, till Messrs. Donald Currie and Co.'s splendid ship was ready to sail. Many of its officers knew me, and when they heard of my arrival called upon me, yet none recognised for some time their acquaintance of scarcely a year back.

But who also hunted me out? Poor old Holly, very much the worse for wear. While I remained at the hotel he never left me, and added much to my bill by his still existing *penchant* for brandy and soda-water.

He insisted upon seeing me on board, and I had not the heart to say no. When time for him to return, there was some difficulty in getting him shipped, for he had taken off his boots, and could not get them on again. At length he was in the stern-sheets of the little craft, all right, the boat gave a roll, and off his hat went to leeward—for it was blowing hard at the time. However, I sent below for one to replace it. As he stood up to receive it another roll occurred, and both his boots disappeared into the sea. In no way disconcerted he selected as comfortable a position as he could find, stretched his legs along the seat, and commenced, as of old, to sing "The Red, White, and Blue."

Fair winds soon took us round to Cape Town, where we embarked a select and most charming number of passengers, among whom were the Premier and leader of the Opposition, Sir Theophilus Shepstone, and the delegates from Natal, also Mr. Kirkwood, Mr. Lamb, and many others. From all—many of whom were old friends—I received the greatest kindness, when well enough to come on deck, which did not occur till we were far into the trade winds. After that I seldom left it, but attended their little gatherings, where politics were certain to be discussed. As I was the latest arrival from the interior, my opinion was often listened to, so I was dubbed the Honourable Member for Matabele.

Fair weather followed us, the good ship steadily and rapidly pursued her course towards her home, and on my arrival in Plymouth I had again to owe to Messrs. Donald Currie and Co., and their officers, grateful thanks for enjoying one of the pleasantest voyages I have made in my life.

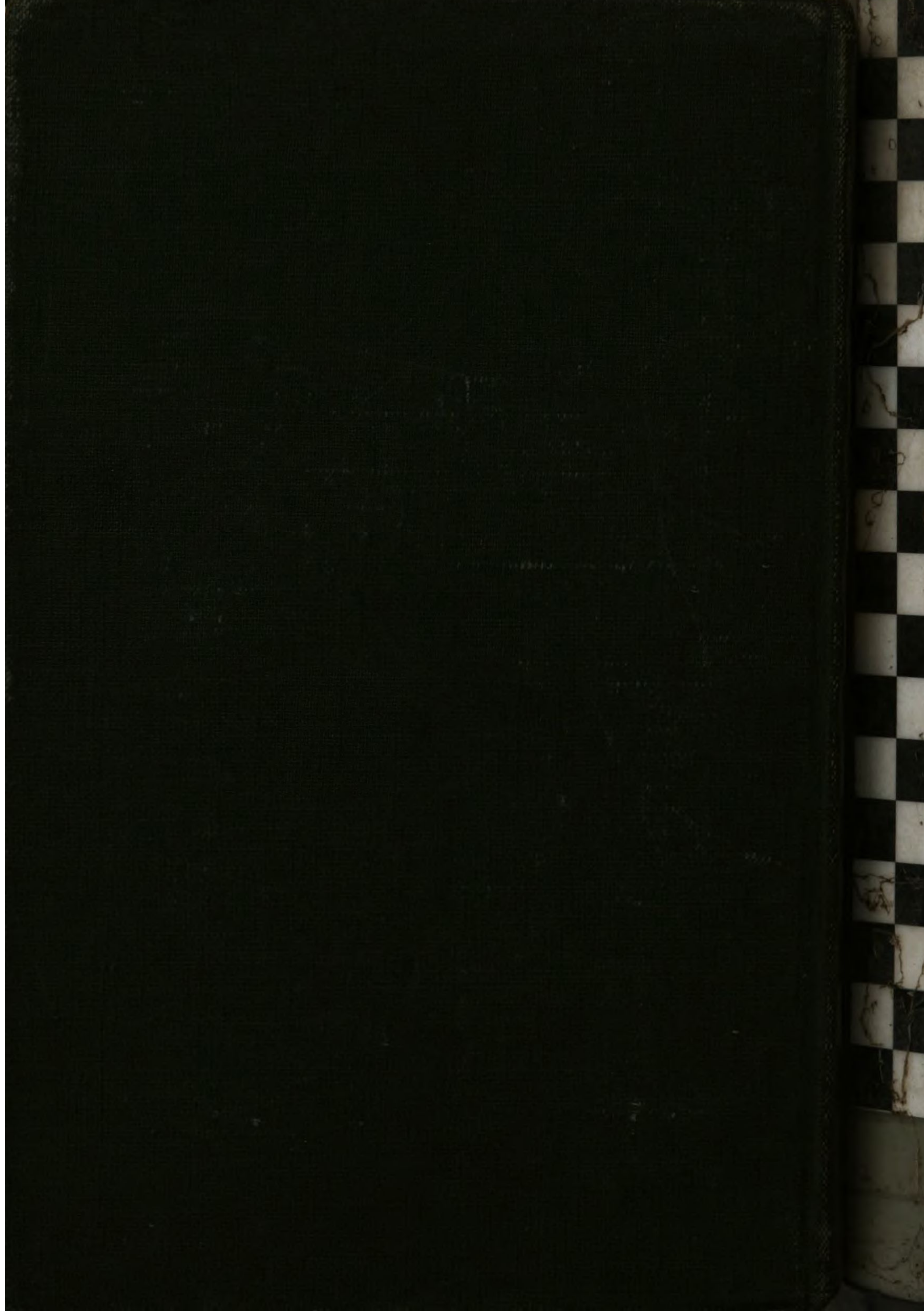
When I landed I first realised that at length I had broken the link that connected me with the stirring life and scenes so lately gone through in the Kalahari Desert, or GREAT THIRST LAND.

THE END.

At

Narr

8



Gillmore, Parker

The great thirst land: a ride through Natal, Orange Free State, Transvaal
and Kalahari Desert

London [usw.] [1878]

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